

# IDEAS BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Exploring the ideas, conversations, and people shaping Nepal's future—from evidence-based research and public policy to technology, society, and culture.

PINTREST

# IIDS INSIGHTS

## VOL 4

RESEARCH. POLICY. CREATIVITY.

JULY 2026

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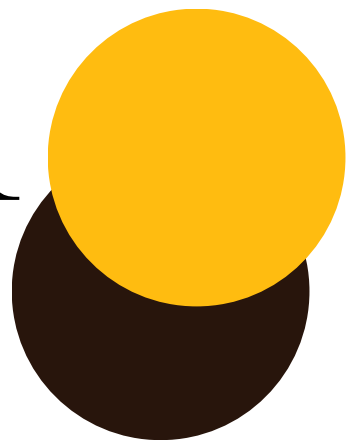
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# Editorial Note



## Every publication tells a story.

Some stories begin with research, while others grow from conversation, experience, and curiosity. IIDS Insights brings these different voices together in one place—turning ideas, reflections, and ongoing work into something worth sharing.

This edition offers a closer look at the people and thinking behind IIDS. It brings together research highlights, publications, events, recommendations, and moments that often remain unseen. More than a record of what we have done, it is a reflection of how ideas develop through collaboration, questioning, and exchange.

At its heart, IIDS Insights is a space for creativity, free thinking, and freedom of opinion. It welcomes diverse perspectives and encourages people to explore, challenge, and imagine without being limited by a single way of seeing the world.

This edition would not have been possible without the time, ideas, and contributions of everyone involved. I would like to thank our researchers, staff, interns, contributors, and colleagues who shared their work, reflections, and recommendations, and who helped bring these pages together.

Wherever you are reading from, thank you for taking the time to join us. I hope you find something within these pages that stays with you long after you've turned the last page.

*Ganisha  
Grimmire*  
Sr. Program and Research Assistant





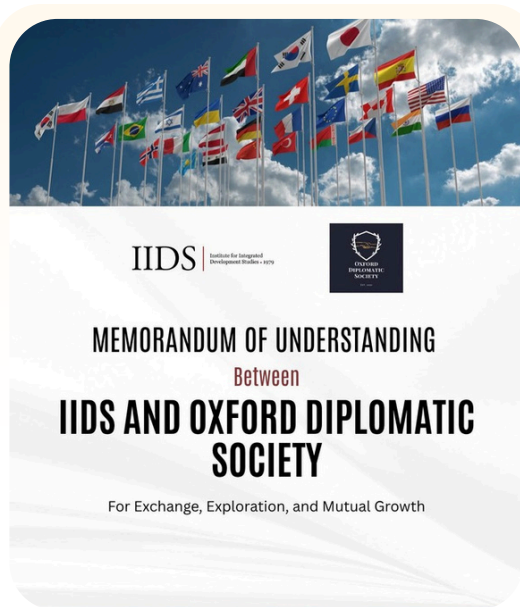
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## Supreme Court Visit

16 July, 2025

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## MoU Signing with Oxford Diplomatic Society

16 July, 2025



## Movie on the House (MOTH) – Episode 11

18 July, 2025

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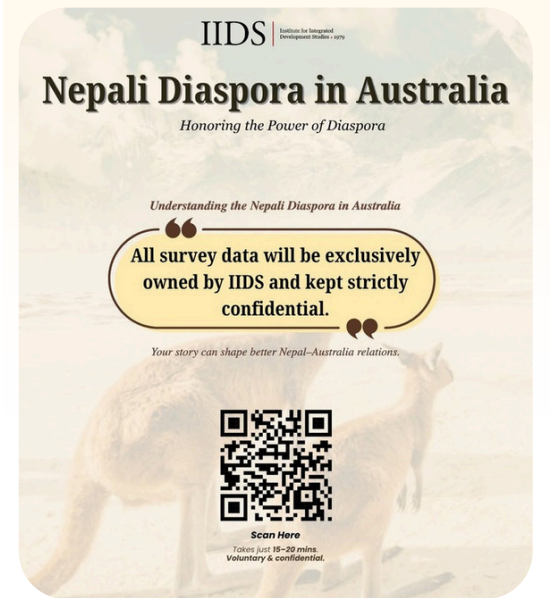
## Introductory Training Workshop on CGE Modeling

21 – 25 July, 2025



## Field Visit to Sun Securities Pvt. Ltd.

29 July, 2025



## Launch of Survey on Nepali Diaspora in Australia

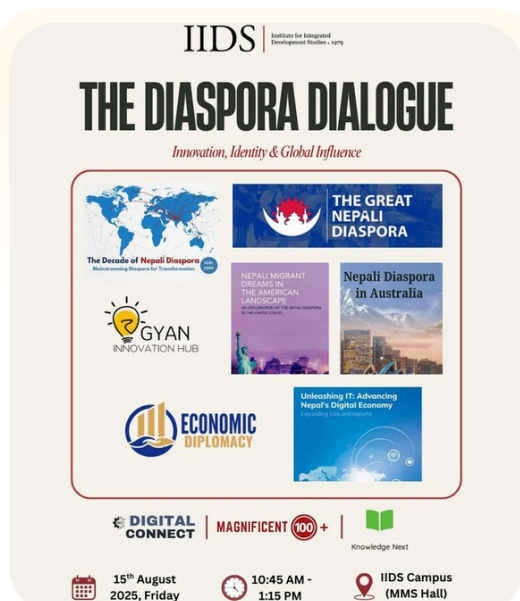
31 July, 2025

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## Conclusion of Summer Internship Program

1 August, 2025



## Diaspora Dialogue

15 August, 2025



## Expert Says – Episode 04 (Himalayan Net Zero Initiative)

24 August, 2025





Digital Talk:  
Harnessing the Power  
of Technology,  
16 July 2025



IDS Apprenticeship  
Fair (8th Edition)  
25 August, 2025



Policy Talk: Innovation  
Underground – AI &  
the Future of Tunneling  
17 October, 2025



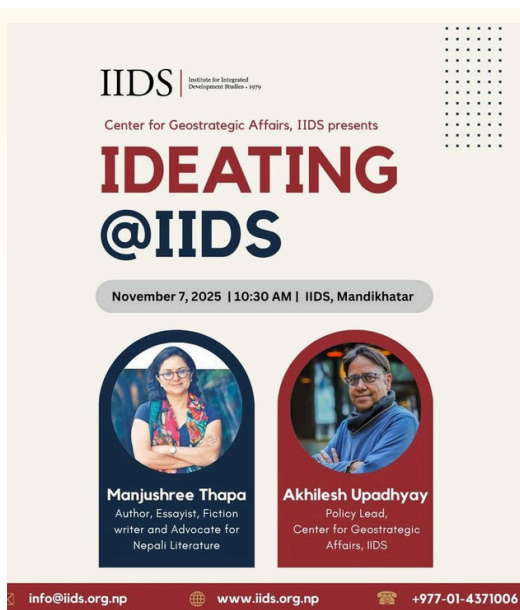
Diaspora Insight  
Session featuring Prof.  
Shyamal Chowdhury  
10 December, 2025



IIDS Retreat 2025  
14-15 December, 2025



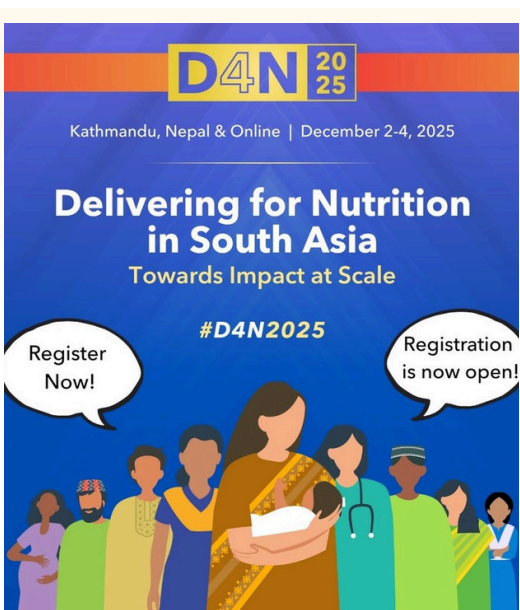
Introduction to Data  
Analysis Training  
Program  
January - March 2026



Ideating @ IIDS –  
Episode 05  
7 November, 2025



IIDS 46th Anniversary  
25 November, 2025



Delivering for Nutrition  
in South Asia: Towards  
Impact at Scale  
2-4 December





# Advance Training on Computable General Equilibrium Modelling

4-7 December, 2025



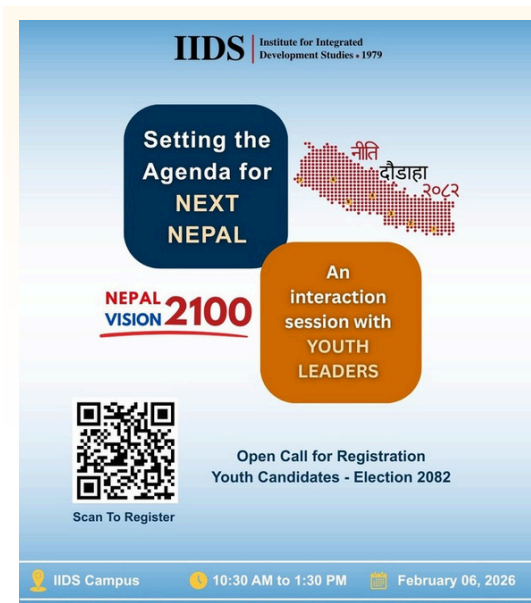
# Policy Conclave 2025

25 December, 2025



# Book Launch Recognition – In The Margins of Empires

16 January, 2026



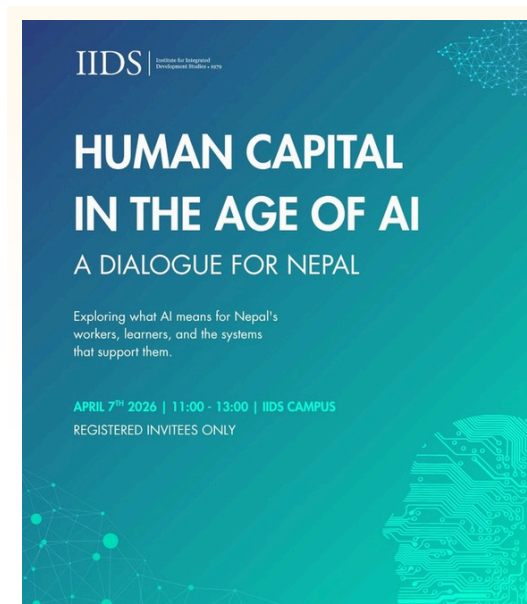
# Niti Daudaha 2082 – Setting the Agenda for Nepal's Economic Future

6 February, 2026



# Book Discussion – A Life in Public Service

13 February, 2026



# Human Capital in the Age of AI: A Dialogue for Nepal,

7 April, 2026



# MoU Signing with Partner Schools under the GYAN Teaching Fellowship

15 April, 2026



# Presentation of White Paper 2026 and Development Strategy

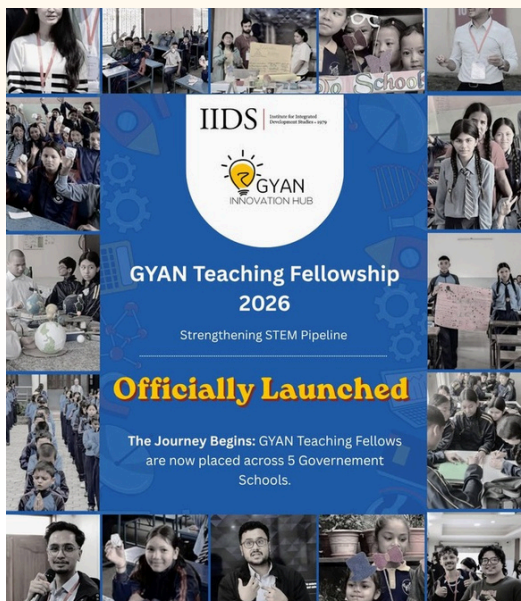
21 April, 2026



# Niti Daudaha Goes Global: Diaspora Engagement Visit to the United States

23 April – 3 May, 2026





Gyan Initiative Launch  
28 April, 2026



Embedded Teaching under the GYAN Fellowship Program  
28 April, 2026



Dissemination Workshop on Inclusive, Resilient, and Low-Carbon Development  
5 May, 2026



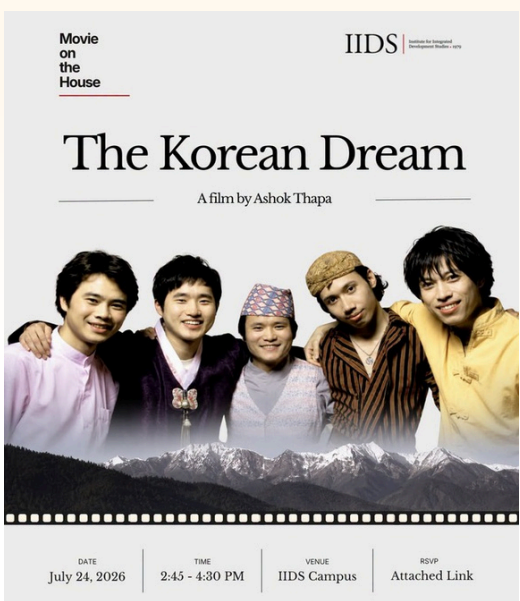
Nepali Diasporas in Australia Report Launch  
18 May, 2026



Niti Daudaha at the CNI Talk Series.  
21 May, 2026



A Research and Policy Dialogue: The Private Sector and the Health System  
2 July, 2026



Movie on the House (MOTH) Episode 12: The Korean Dream  
24 July, 2026



Policy Brief Presentation by Summer Intern  
24 July, 2026



Yuwa Niti Sambad  
31 July, 2026

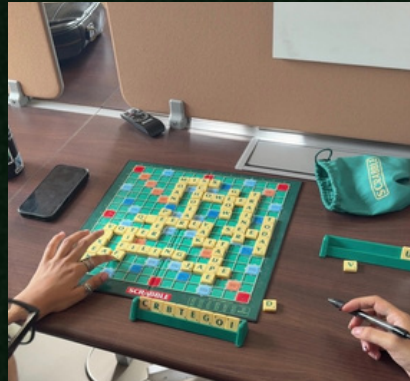


# Learning Thursdays

Learning Thursdays is one of the initiatives that reflects IIDS' culture of continuous learning. Every week, a team member leads a roundtable discussion on topics ranging from youth migration and digitalization to secularism in Nepal and women's property rights, creating a space for meaningful conversations and shared learning.



Launch of Summer Internship 2026



Board Games



Casual Fun Debates



Communication without the Awkwardness



Policy Brief 101



Impact Evaluation by Dr. Uttam Sharma



Systems of Government Presentation



FIFA World Cup



I Lived in North Korea for Three Years



Visit to Sun Securities Pvt. Ltd



Visit to National Museum of Nepal



Visit to Arniko School



# GURKHA SYNDROME

## NEPAL'S REMITTANCE-DRIVEN ECONOMIC PARADOX



*For over two centuries, the Gurkha has symbolized courage, discipline, and service. The tradition formally began after the Treaty of Sugauli (1815–16), when Britain started recruiting Nepali soldiers into the British Army. What began as selective military enlistment has today evolved into mass civilian migration. Millions of Nepalis, largely young and working-age, now seek employment across the Gulf, Malaysia, South Korea, and beyond.*

This transformation has reshaped Nepal's economy, labor market, and society. The historic Gurkha legacy has gradually evolved into what may now be called the "Gurkha Syndrome"—a remittance-driven development model that has reduced poverty and stabilized the economy while simultaneously weakening the country's long-term productive capacity.

Nepal today ranks among the world's most remittance-dependent economies. Unlike smaller countries such as Tonga or Kyrgyzstan, Nepal's dependence is remarkable not only because of remittances as a share of GDP but also because of the sheer scale of migration relative to its population and economy. Remittance has undoubtedly been Nepal's greatest poverty reduction program. While poverty declined only marginally during the 1990s, it fell dramatically over the past two decades despite modest economic growth and limited domestic job creation. This achievement, however, has been driven less by productive transformation than by the earnings of Nepalis working abroad.

Remittances have also become the cornerstone of Nepal's macroeconomic stability. They now account for more than **60 percent of gross foreign exchange earnings**. Foreign exchange reserves have **increased** by more than **2.5 times** within **four years to over US\$ 24.5 billion**, more than **55 percent of GDP** providing **import cover** exceeding **nineteen months**. Following the external sector challenges of 2022, strong remittance inflows restored balance-of-payments stability and replenished reserves.

**Yet these impressive macroeconomic indicators conceal deeper structural weaknesses.**

Nepal is witnessing one of the world's most extraordinary episodes of labor outmigration under peacetime conditions. Around **2,300** Nepalis including roughly 300 students **leave** the country **every day**. In only four years, more than **11 percent** of the population has **migrated** abroad, disproportionately comprising young and productive workers. Migration is no longer merely a coping strategy; it has become the country's dominant aspiration. Ironically, while Nepalis leave in record numbers, domestic labor shortages are increasingly filled by workers from India and Bangladesh. Nepal thus faces a striking paradox: it exports its own labor while importing foreign workers to sustain domestic production.

**The economic consequences are equally profound.**

**Remittances** have fueled consumption, bank deposits, and liquidity, but they have generated relatively little productive investment. Credit has expanded rapidly for decades, yet much of it has flowed into imports, real estate, and other low-productivity sectors rather than export-oriented industries or technological upgrading.



Meanwhile, exports remain below **3** percent of GDP while imports average around one-third of GDP, producing one of the world's largest trade deficits. Rather than transforming the productive structure, Nepal's financial system has largely financed consumption and asset inflation.

The most visible distortion has occurred in the land market. Remittance-fueled credit has driven land prices to extraordinary levels. Relative to income, Nepal now has some of the world's most expensive land despite being among Asia's poorest economies.

These inflated land values have become a major impediment to development. Infrastructure projects increasingly spend more on land acquisition than on construction itself. The Lumbini International Airport required land compensation worth nearly three times its construction cost, while more than NPR 40 billions have already been spent acquiring land for the Budhigandaki Hydropower Project before construction has even begun. High land prices also raise the cost of education, housing, manufacturing, and virtually every productive investment.



The broader economy has become correspondingly expensive. Nepal's overall price level is among the highest in South Asia despite having one of the region's lowest per capita incomes. Rising minimum wages, coupled with soaring land prices and other structural costs, have steadily eroded competitiveness in labor-intensive industries.

The apparent macroeconomic stability created by large foreign exchange reserves therefore risks creating a false sense of complacency and security. The current external strength reflects exceptional remittance inflows and subdued imports rather than stronger exports, higher productivity, or industrial competitiveness. Such stability remains inherently fragile if migration slows or global labor demand weakens.

## NEPAL'S EXPERIENCE IS OFTEN LOOSELY COMPARED TO DUTCH DISEASE, BUT THE ANALOGY IS INCOMPLETE.



Dutch Disease arises when natural resource discoveries generate export windfalls that appreciate the exchange rate and undermine manufacturing. Nepal's case is fundamentally different. External earnings come not from natural resources but from millions of workers employed abroad. Income accrues to households rather than directly to the state, while the country's fixed exchange rate limits nominal currency appreciation.

Most importantly, Dutch Disease reallocates labor across domestic sectors; Nepal's model exports labor altogether. The result is not simply sectoral imbalance but demographic depletion.

The Gurkha Syndrome therefore represents a distinct development phenomenon characterized by:

- large-scale outmigration of productive workers;
- declining domestic labor participation and productivity;
- excessive financialization through real estate;
- weak productive investment despite abundant liquidity;
- rising production costs and declining competitiveness; and
- growing social aspirations centered on leaving the country rather than building opportunities within it.



This is Nepal's remittance paradox. The same remittances that have dramatically reduced poverty and stabilized the economy have also contributed to weakening the country's productive base, increasing external dependence, and delaying structural transformation.

The solution is not to discourage migration. Labor mobility will remain an important source of opportunity and foreign exchange. The challenge is to convert remittance from a poverty-reduction instrument into a catalyst for long-term development.

This requires redirecting financial resources toward productive sectors, modern agriculture, value-added manufacturing, natural resource industries, technology import, digital services, education, innovation, and service exports. Public investment must prioritize productivity-enhancing infrastructure rather than fragmented projects with limited economic returns.

Equally important are reforms to land and labor markets to reduce production costs and improve competitiveness. Nepal must also strengthen education and skills development to support a gradual transition from exporting labor to exporting knowledge-intensive services.

Nepal cannot build its future on absentee labor and imported consumption alone. It must reclaim competitiveness, lower structural costs, invest in human capital, and integrate into global value chains through both natural resource-based and service exports.

More broadly, Nepal's experience illustrates why developing countries must also develop their own economic vocabulary. While concepts such as Dutch Disease remain valuable, they cannot fully explain Nepal's unique development trajectory. The Gurkha Syndrome captures a distinct reality, a remittance-driven model that has simultaneously generated welfare gains and structural vulnerability. It deserves recognition not merely as a descriptive label but as a new analytical framework for understanding the opportunities and challenges confronting Nepal and many labor-exporting economies in the decades ahead.



Dr. Biswash Gauchan, FCA is the Executive Chair of the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS). A Fellow Chartered Accountant with a Ph.D. in Economics, his work focuses on Nepal's economic policy, development, and South Asian geo-strategic issues. He has also served as a member of the High-Level Economic Reform Recommendation Commission, contributing to key national economic policy discussions.



# THE INVISIBLE BACKBONE

## WHY NEPAL MUST STOP CONTROLLING MIGRANT WOMEN AND START PROTECTING THEM



### “DO YOU KNOW WHAT WORK YOU WILL DO?”

It was no longer just an immigration question. It became a national question. Do we, as a country, know where our women are going, whether they are safe, and who will help them if something goes wrong?

After that day, my way of seeing migrant women changed. Whenever I saw women in the migrant worker line, I wondered where they were going, whether they knew anyone there, and whether they had someone to call if they faced trouble. Sometimes, when I had the opportunity, I would ask small questions.

Years passed, but the questions did not leave me. Whether I was in my college hostel, back home in Nepal, or preparing to leave again for graduate studies, I kept thinking about safety. When we leave the country, are we safer abroad, or are we safer at home? And why does this question become heavier when the migrant is a woman?



In 2021, while I was in Nepal and planning for graduate school, I came across news that the government was considering a rule requiring women under 40 to get family and local-level permission before travelling abroad on visit visas. The proposal was criticised strongly and did not move forward in the way many feared. But the idea itself was disturbing.

What does it mean when an adult woman needs permission to travel?

The state says it wants to protect women. But protection cannot mean control. Protection cannot mean asking women to prove that they deserve mobility. If the state is worried about exploitation, the answer is not to restrict women's movement. The answer is to make migration safer.

This is where Nepal's contradiction becomes clear. We celebrate remittances, but we do not equally respect the workers who send them.

We praise migrant workers when their money enters the economy, but we often fail to protect them before they leave, while they are abroad, and after they return.

I still remember a moment at Tribhuvan International Airport in 2014.

I was leaving Nepal for my undergraduate studies in Delhi, standing in the emigration line with my documents in hand. When my turn came, the officer asked me where I was going and what I was studying. It felt routine. I answered and moved on.

But before my turn, I had noticed another line. There were many women there. Some were young, some middle-aged. Some looked strong and determined, but their voices carried uncertainty. It was a line for migrant workers. As the line moved, I heard an officer ask one woman: “Where are you going? Do you know what work you will do?”

That question stayed with me.

At that age, I did not fully understand the weight of that question. I assumed they knew where they were going, what work they would do, and who would receive them. A few weeks later, while scrolling online, I came across stories of women migrant workers being mistreated in Gulf countries<sup>1</sup>. I read about women working long hours, being isolated, facing abuse, having their movement restricted, and struggling to return home. Suddenly, the question I had heard at the airport sounded different.



**“Remittances are central to Nepal’s economy”** supporting household consumption, education, health care, housing, debt repayment, and foreign exchange stability. According to the World Bank’s Nepal Country Gender Assessment 2025, migrant Nepalis sent NPR 1,445.32 billion in remittances in 2023/24. Yet women accounted for less than 10 percent of total labour permits issued in 2021/22, and those who migrated were more likely to be concentrated in cleaning, laundry, caregiving, au pair work, and nursing assistance.

### **This is unfair, and it is also ineffective.**

Nepal has repeatedly used restrictions and bans on women’s migration, especially for domestic work in Gulf countries. These rules are often justified in the name of safety. But when regular migration channels are closed, migration does not stop; it often becomes more dangerous. Women may turn to informal brokers, unofficial routes, or incomplete documentation, making them more vulnerable to abuse, debt, trafficking, and lack of legal protection<sup>6</sup>.

A policy that claims to protect women can end up making them less safe.

The real issue is not whether women should migrate. Women, like men, have the right to move, work, earn, and decide their futures. The real issue is whether Nepal has built systems that allow them to migrate with dignity and protection.

At the airport, women should not only be asked, “Do you know what work you will do?” They should be able to answer with confidence because the system has prepared them. They should know their contract, rights, emergency contacts, embassy location, complaint mechanisms, and where to seek help if something goes wrong.



### **This requires a serious shift in policy.**

*First,*

Nepal must replace paternalistic restrictions with rights-based protection. Blanket bans and permission-based rules should not be the foundation of migration governance. The focus should be safe recruitment, stronger monitoring of agencies, bilateral labour agreements, and destination-country accountability.

*Second,*

Women need stronger pre-departure training. This should include contract literacy, legal rights, financial literacy, language support, workplace risks, emergency contacts, and practical guidance on seeking help. No woman should be sent abroad with hope alone.

*Third,*

Nepali embassies in major destination countries need stronger gender-responsive support systems. A dedicated desk for women migrant workers, shelters, legal referrals, emergency hotlines, and regular outreach could make a real difference, especially for women working inside private homes.

*Fourth,*

Reintegration support must be taken seriously. Many women return after years of work with savings, experience, and resilience. Others return with trauma, debt, health issues, or social stigma. Nepal needs programmes that support returnee women through skills recognition, counselling, entrepreneurship support, financial planning, and local employment linkages.



## **THE REAL BACKBONE**

Behind every migrant worker is a family, a dream, and a future. Protecting women means protecting all three.



*Fifth*

Nepal must recognise migrant workers as political citizens, not only economic contributors. Nepali migrant workers do not stop being citizens when they leave the country. Yet many remain unable to vote from destination countries, even though their remittances help sustain households and the national economy<sup>7</sup>. Without voting rights, their concerns remain easy for political parties to ignore. If Nepal receives their remittances, Nepal must also hear their political voice.

*Sixth*

Nepal must expand how it understands the diaspora. Too often, the word “diaspora” is used for professionals, investors, students, and settled communities abroad, while migrant workers are treated separately. But a woman working abroad, sending money home, building networks, learning new skills, and supporting Nepal from outside is also part of Nepal’s global story.

Why should a woman who funds her household, supports Nepal’s economy, and carries Nepali identity abroad not be seen as part of the diaspora?

The question I heard at the airport in 2014 still comes back to me: “Do you know what work you will do?”

### Today, I would like to ask more questions.

Does Nepal know what risks women face when they leave?

Does Nepal know how much they contribute?

Does Nepal know how often their sacrifices are ignored?

Does Nepal know that controlling women is not the same as protecting them?

celebrated only when the money arrives and forgotten when she needs help. If her money can build homes, educate children, repay loans, and support the national economy, then her rights should be strong enough to travel with her.

Nepal calls her a hero when the remittance arrives. It is time to treat her like one before she leaves, while she works, and when she comes home.



Nepal calls migrant workers the “**backbone of the economy**”. But if that backbone includes women, then women must be visible in our policies, not only in our remittance figures.

A woman should not have to choose between poverty at home and danger abroad. She should not have to ask for permission to earn. She should not be



About the author: Sneha Ghimire is a Senior Program and Research Assistant at IIDS whose work explores migration, diaspora engagement, and public policy. She is passionate about uncovering the stories, connections, and unseen contributions that shape communities across borders.



# 7 WAYS TO REJECT YOUR PARENTS' SCHEME TO GET YOU MARRIED AS A NEPALI WOMAN



**Politely talk to your parents:** After all, communication is key. I am sure if you talk to your parents kindly, they will understand that you are only 22, you do not need to start looking for a man who you would theoretically spend your entire life with. And if they bring up their interest in having grandchildren, tell them logically that the concept of a biological clock is not scientific as it is almost never about a woman's body, but a man's. But that has never worked, has it?

**Delete your Facebook:** Talking to your parents did not work? Try deleting your Facebook account. It's tiring to wake up each day and see a new friend request by another Nepali man who looked like every other one that have sent you a request. Without Facebook, your parents cannot advertise you to prospective families, and this also ensures an end to the boring conversations with guys who do not know how to talk to a woman.



**Stop talking to aunties and uncles at parties:** The longer you talk to relatives at a party, the more time it buys them to advertise their best friend's sister's daughter's son, whose existence you have only passively known about. It gets awkward after a certain point. It gets really awkward when you know that the son is not even into women!!!

**Set your standards high:** Tell your parents that you do not want to marry someone who has already turned 30. And the fact that he is still looking for someone to marry him in the Nepali market is a telltale sign that you should absolutely not marry him. Tell your parents if they are still adamant on looking for an eligible guy for you, he should least be unique than all the other profiles they have sent you. Every guy is around 27-30, studied engineering or medical or IT or accountancy abroad, and comes from a nice pedigree (your parents know of their family).



**Act insane in front of him:** If your parents forced you to go on a date with a guy, start leaving subtle comments for him to uninterest you. "I do not know how to cook" or "I never do fasting" or "I hate children". And if these do not work, act insane. "I am a sex addict."

**Act insane in front of his parents:** Chances are your parents will invite your "betrothed" and his family for dinner. When you meet them, argue back. His dad will start criticizing "modern women" and the stain it has marked on the marriage market for his sons. He will praise his boys for their skills at technology, but reality is that they are only good at shutting themselves away in the rooms and playing video games all day with their friends. When he gets drunk, he will start explaining how your major works to you and what you should have studied instead. And on top of all that noise, the aunty will make some passive comments about your dark skin, your weight, and the clothes you are wearing.



**Get married:** So, you end up getting married to one of those Facebook guys, was it out of choice or was it out of pressure? How many kids are you willing to have with this stranger? But it doesn't matter. You will do your thing, and he will mind his own business. Both of you will have separate bank accounts. But remember to never ever take his last name.





# WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS NEED MORE THAN LOANS: WHY SKILLS MATTER AS MUCH AS FINANCE

## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTERPRISE

When discussions about women's entrepreneurship arise in Nepal, the conversation often begins—and ends—with access to finance. More loans, lower interest rates, and greater financial inclusion are commonly presented as the primary solutions for empowering women entrepreneurs. While these are undoubtedly important, they tell only part of the story.



Recent research conducted among 309 women entrepreneurs across the Kathmandu Valley suggests that empowering women requires looking beyond finance alone. Entrepreneurship is not simply about obtaining capital; it is equally about having the knowledge, skills, confidence, and networks to transform that capital into sustainable businesses.

Across Nepal, women are increasingly establishing enterprises in services, manufacturing, handicrafts, agriculture, food processing, and retail. These businesses generate employment, diversify household incomes, and contribute to local economic development. Yet many women continue to operate in environments shaped by social expectations, limited institutional support, and unequal access to opportunities.

One striking finding from the study is that many women entrepreneurs began their businesses without formal loans. Instead, they relied on personal savings or support from family members. While this reflects remarkable resilience and determination, it also highlights persistent barriers within the formal financial system. Lengthy lending procedures, collateral requirements, and limited awareness of available financial products continue to discourage many women from seeking institutional credit.



However, the research also reveals an important insight: access to credit alone does not automatically translate into women's empowerment.

Women who possess stronger financial literacy and technical know-how are significantly more likely to develop successful entrepreneurial ventures. Understanding budgeting, managing cash flow, adopting new technologies, improving products, and making informed business decisions equips entrepreneurs to survive in competitive markets. These capabilities strengthen businesses long before external finance becomes the deciding factor.

In fact, the study shows that entrepreneurial development itself is the bridge between technical skills and empowerment. As women acquire practical business knowledge and strengthen their enterprises, they gain greater confidence, increased economic independence, stronger decision-making power, and a more influential role within their families and communities.

## THIS FINDING HAS IMPORTANT POLICY IMPLICATIONS.



For years, entrepreneurship promotion has often focused on increasing credit availability. While expanding financial access remains essential, it should be complemented by investments in entrepreneurship education, technical training, digital literacy, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Women entrepreneurs repeatedly identified these forms of support as equally—if not more—valuable than financial assistance alone.

Another challenge that deserves greater attention is the burden of balancing business and household responsibilities. Many women continue to shoulder unpaid care work while simultaneously managing enterprises. Without supportive family environments, flexible business support services, and social recognition of women's economic contributions, entrepreneurship becomes significantly more difficult.

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE



Government agencies, financial institutions, development organizations, and the private sector each have a role to play. Business incubation programs, mentorship initiatives, simplified lending procedures, market linkages, digital platforms, and targeted training can collectively create an ecosystem where women entrepreneurs are better positioned to succeed.

Equally important is changing the narrative around women entrepreneurs. They should not be viewed merely as beneficiaries of development programs but as drivers of innovation, employment, and inclusive economic growth. Every successful woman-owned enterprise strengthens not only household welfare but also local markets and national economic resilience.

Nepal has made encouraging progress in promoting women's participation in entrepreneurship, yet substantial gaps remain. Bridging these gaps requires moving beyond a narrow focus on finance and adopting a more comprehensive approach that builds capabilities alongside capital.

Empowering women entrepreneurs is ultimately about expanding opportunities—not just providing resources. When women have access to knowledge, technology, mentorship, supportive networks, and enabling institutions, entrepreneurship becomes more than a livelihood strategy. It becomes a pathway toward economic independence, gender equality, and sustainable national development.

### Reference

Khadgi, N., & Paudel, U. R. (2025). *Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Evaluating Access to Credit, Financial Literacy, Technical Know-How, and Government Support in Kathmandu Valley*. *Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 366–389. <https://doi.org/10.3126/qjmss.v7i2.87797>



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# NEPAL WANTS INTRADAY TRADING. DOES ITS MARKET ACTUALLY WORK YET?

**D**uring this year's Budget Speech (2082/83), Honourable Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle pledged what Nepalis traders have waited for since the launch of digitalization of NEPSE<sup>1</sup>. Same-day purchases and sales. Short selling. Derivatives, eventually. All in the context of a larger concept of advancing the stock exchange itself (Fiscal Nepal, 2026).



Intraday trading is a type of trading that involves the purchase and sale of the same stock within a day, before the market closes at the end of the day. Basically, traders buy stocks in the morning, sell in the afternoon, and traders don't hold stocks overnight. Currently, that is impossible for Nepalis as investors. In accordance with the present regulations of NEPSE, the shares acquired today cannot get into the demat account of traders on the same day, and till that settlement, traders cannot resell anything (NEPSE Trading, 2026). Intraday trading eliminates this waiting period, letting traders to open and close their position on a same day, even multiple times over.

On paper, this leaves Nepal at the same level of development as other countries. The other markets settle trades on a same-day or next-day basis. Even today in Nepal, the trade takes place two business days after the trading, in time period T+2. When traders trade, two business days later, shares are settled, but it has been that very gap, in itself, that has prevented intraday trading for years, despite all its enthusiastic traders.

## But here is what the Budget Speech (2082/83) did not spend much time on.

In 2025, NEPSE's annual turnover reached its highest level of Rs 2.12 trillion, which far exceeds the amount seen in the market prior to 2020. It was a loud and rapid market, jam-packed into merely 284 listed companies with combined valuations of some 4.4 trillion rupees. Nepal still lacks the basic legal and operational framework that intraday trading requires, the same kind of framework that markets elsewhere in Asia and beyond have already put in place (Karki et al, 2025).

If you add leverage to a market such as this, you are into something quite different from modernization. You are seeing how resilient it is: the amount of stress that it can withstand before something gives way. Nepal is already experiencing a glimpse of the disaster in that scenario. SEBON<sup>2</sup> adopted a margin trading directive in March, which allows investors to purchase stock for a 70 percent margin while only paying 30 percent (Sharesansar, 2026). The exchange has already had to respond to that same volatility risk on its own end. Since April 2026, a 5 percent swing in the index within the first two hours triggers a 15-minute halt, and an 8 percent swing suspends trading for the rest of the day. That is a market building faster brakes at the same time it may be asked to handle a faster engine.

However, another draft directive that prescribes more rigid requirements for those margins has been criticized by market analysts who argue that the requirements for valuing the collateral and forced liquidation may instead harm average investors (NEPSE Trading, 2025). There is even a quicker and more automated form of the same risk involved in intraday trading. There is already one space of market analysis indicating Nepal should not rush this rollout, as there is still a lot of groundwork that needs to be done (Nepalytix, 2026).

## THE NUMBERS

**Rs. 2.12T**

NEPSE annual turnover, 2025 - a record high

**284**

Listed companies carrying 4.4T in combined value

**70/30**

Margin trading split approved by SEBON, March 2026

## CIRCUIT BREAKER

Since April 2026: a **5% swing** in the first two hours halts trading 15 minutes; an **8% swing** suspends trading for the rest of the day.

1. NEPSE: Nepal Stock Exchange, the country's only licensed stock exchange, based in Kathmandu.

2. SEBON: Securities Board of Nepal, the government regulator responsible for overseeing the securities market, including NEPSE and licensed brokers.



## So, how does the payment system actually work?

Any intraday trading is dependent on the fact that money flows at the same pace as the trading. If you sell at 11:00AM, then you should ideally receive your payment within five minutes of selling – at 11:05AM. In the case of Nepal, however, this appears to be impossible in the short run due to frictions in the banking sector that fail to accommodate such rapid transfers between your bank, broker and your demat account. In addition, NEPSE's payment integration with connectIPS which requires OTP<sup>3</sup>-verification for the transaction above NRS. 1 lakh, delays payment settlement, which fail traders to carry out trades within 5 minutes.

Digitalization is where most of this gap actually gets resolved. A fully digitalized, real-time settlement pipeline would remove the manual steps that currently stretch a trade from a five-minute transaction into a two-day wait, and would let money clear at the same pace shares do. But the work is not just on the banking side. NEPSE's own back-end still leans on public procurement cycles for technology upgrades, a process that has historically slowed its ability to modernize (Nepal Live Today / Samriddhi Foundation, 2022). Closing that gap means investing in real-time clearing through CDSC<sup>4</sup> and building surveillance systems capable of catching manipulation in fast, high-frequency trades, not just quick trades themselves.

However, a new SEBON rule addressing the above mentioned is not the only solution. The actions of Nepal Rastra Bank and the Finance Ministry should go in parallel, not one after the other. Faster interbank settlement; Real API<sup>5</sup> connections between banking institutions, stockbrokers, and the depository unit, with the result that money and shares flow instantly, and shortly after the transaction takes place, instead of the following business morning.

Introducing intraday trading is not a problem but making sure to safeguard the investors with the payment systems loopholes and seamless trade settlement is the major concern rather than faster trading does, or after. By fixing that order right, Nepal's capital market can create positive hopes among the existing investors and those who wish to invest in Nepal's stock market.



Trader



Broker



NEPSE



CDSC



Settlement  
(T+2)

3. OPT: One-Time Password, a temporary numeric or alphanumeric code sent to a user's phone or email to verify a transaction before it can be completed.
4. CDSC: CDS and Clearing Limited, NEPSE's depository and clearing subsidiary responsible for settling trades and maintaining investors' demat accounts.
5. API: Application Programming Interface, a set of protocols that lets two systems (for example, a bank's system and a broker's platform) exchange data and execute transactions automatically, without manual steps in between.

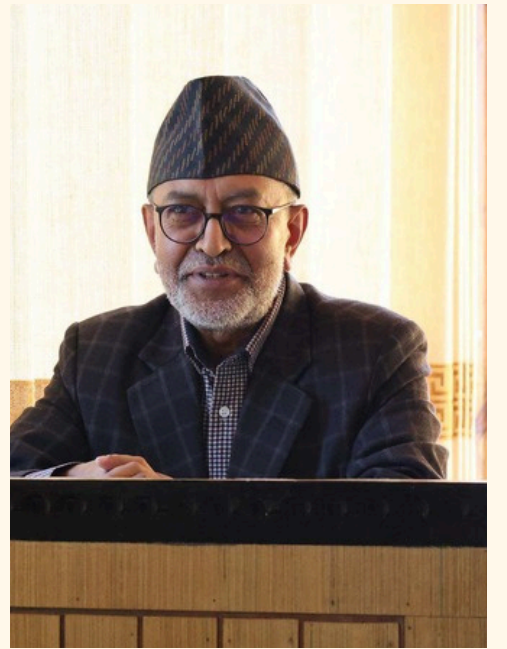
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About the author: Aasutosh is an Economics student with an endless curiosity and an even longer list of things to talk about. An avid conversationalist, he enjoys meaningful discussions, music, exploring new ideas, and a little bit of astrology that keeps life interesting.

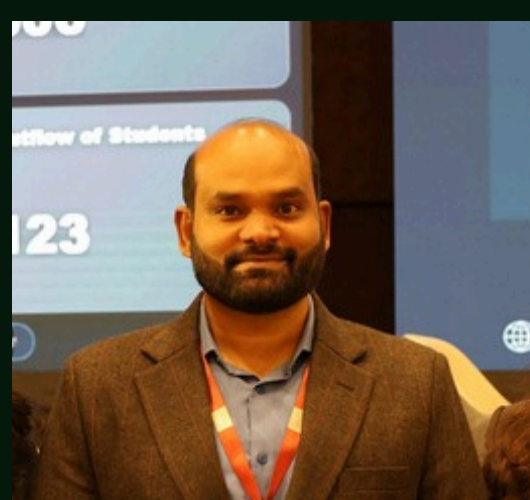






**A FEW MOMENTS FROM IIDS EVENTS DURING 2025–2026.**









# A MIRROR THAT FLATTERS

*What do you know about the algorithmic agenda?*

It's a typical weekday. I woke up late because I had been up all night scrolling till dawn broke. I made myself a cup of coffee, that is to say I emptied two sachets of Katmandu Irish Rum Cream into a mug and called it an Americano. The java was better than it ever would have been on a Tuesday and deserved a moment. Yet, instead, I was on my phone.

In that tiniest moment of clarity, I realised Instagram has rendered me legible. It saw through my instant coffee and the morning and my niche humor and whatever version of myself I thought I was presenting.

I couldn't help but wonder: at what point did we become so readable?

Especially when I never handed anything over. Well, not willingly, anyway. The media just learnt me the way a lover would after enough 2 AM conversations.

Even though I wasn't looking for anything in particular, which I never am, I'd been on it since the alarm finally gave up trying this morning.

Now it's somewhere between the second sip and the fourth reel with my fingers hovering over the icons of at least three of my friends. *She'd get this, and she'd get this, oh she'd especially get this.* But there, I stopped because a thought had knocked.

I let it in.





Except this paramour had never asked; it had just watched me. Like a ghost, it sat with me in the dark learning the rhythm of my loneliness. It observed every tilt of my attention and the phantoms of all the interests I'd cycled through just this week. It knew exactly what I liked, and what I was like. And it turned around and fed me myself.

I had even sent most of my feed to my girls with the caption "this is literally us!"



By the way, can you actually remember the reels you came across this morning? Even the ones you laughed at and forwarded to the group chat?

Probably not. Because those vids had your complete attention, right up until they didn't. And then the next thing had it. And then the next.

Anyway, somewhere in the midst of it all, my coffee had gone cold.

Well, time to head to work.

I was in my cubicle now, insulated from the rest of humanity by a partition. I reached for my phone in between spreadsheets; almost involuntarily, I opened TikTok. I was sneaking giggles on mute, and I glanced around to check if anyone noticed, only to find that my coworkers were all also on their phones.

We looked like a guilty, dopamine-starved bunch. In a room full of people, each one of us was elsewhere entirely.

Which would be fine, maybe, if what we were all watching was random. But it wasn't.

I had been up all night watching Egypt play, and to absolute misery, lose to Argentina. I was jarred. I was ranting to him afterwards, sending clips because he'd missed the match. He's the kind of person who agrees with everything I say. So he, just like my algorithm, fed me nothing but validation, and to me, it felt like the absolute truth. It was all very, very confirmatory.

But this morning I realised my colleagues felt just as strongly, but for Argentina.

I couldn't help but wonder: how do two people, despite having been an audience to the exact same reality, come back with completely different truths?

# IT'S THE FEED.



So, I did what any reasonable person who's questioning the very fabric of digital reality would do. I decided to run a little experiment. I went on Instagram, changed my interests under the "your algorithm" section to keywords like "Argentina" and "Argentina FIFA World Cup." Then, I closed the app and gave the black box a good twenty minutes.

When I reopened the gram, my feed had a paradigm shift. It suddenly had a brand-new opinion. And it was extremely confident about it.

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So, there's the reason we only ever seem to stumble upon things we already believe. Not necessarily because we're always the ones with the "right" opinions. But because the algorithm isn't interested in challenging us. You can think of it as a mirror that flatters rather than reflects. It just confirms your prejudices and concentrates them back on you.

And somewhere on the other side of the partition, my coworkers' feeds were doing the exact same, just in the opposite direction.

We all had our biases, and Instagram just handed them back to us more solidified.

I couldn't help but wonder: at what point did we stop forming opinions and start just receiving them? At what point did we allow the abdication of our agency?

Because here's the thing about a marionette. It feels like it's dancing on its own.

By the time I left work, I was tired in a way that had nothing to do with today's fill of spreadsheets.

I reached for my phone to call myself a Pathao. And briefly, I felt a specific kind of resentment at how necessary it has become. I find myself thinking about the phone I once forgot at my friend's place for days during Grade 9's summer break. No, I didn't ditch it because I

was careless. It just didn't occur to me to need it the way I need my prescription glasses. And portable news was clearly not in fashion then. I would read it in the morning with breakfast, then later at 8 in the evening, when I sat around the TV with my father for the day's updates, and that was it. It didn't follow me to bed, and I wasn't saturated yet.

I'm not saying that was better, exactly. I'm saying I knew the difference between what I had chosen to know and what had simply happened to me.





“WHEN ALGORITHMS  
DECIDE WHAT WE SEE,  
WHAT WE BUY, AND  
WHAT WE BELIEVE, WE  
RISK OUTSOURCING NOT  
JUST OUR CHOICES, BUT  
OUR HUMANITY.”

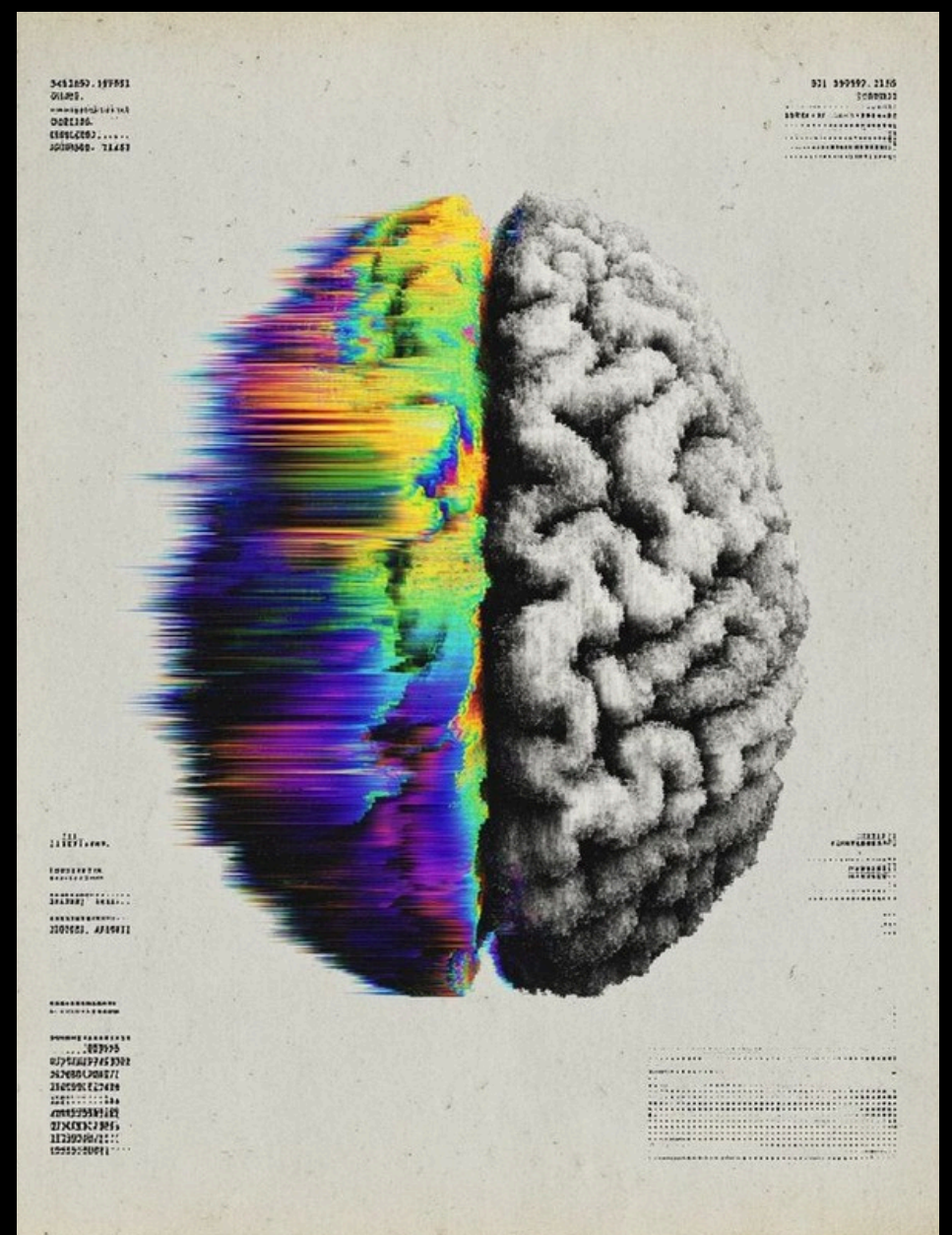
-Inspired by  
discussions on  
algorithmic influence

# Machines rewrite human behavior.

There used to be a membrane separating me and the information. Sure, it was thin, but it was there.

Now, it's all fluid, and we absorb everything. And I realised that somewhere in that saturation, our empathy has diluted too. There's a growing compassion fatigue. Nowadays, breaking news has stopped being an event; for many, it has become... weather. The news neither sparks glee nor gloom anymore.

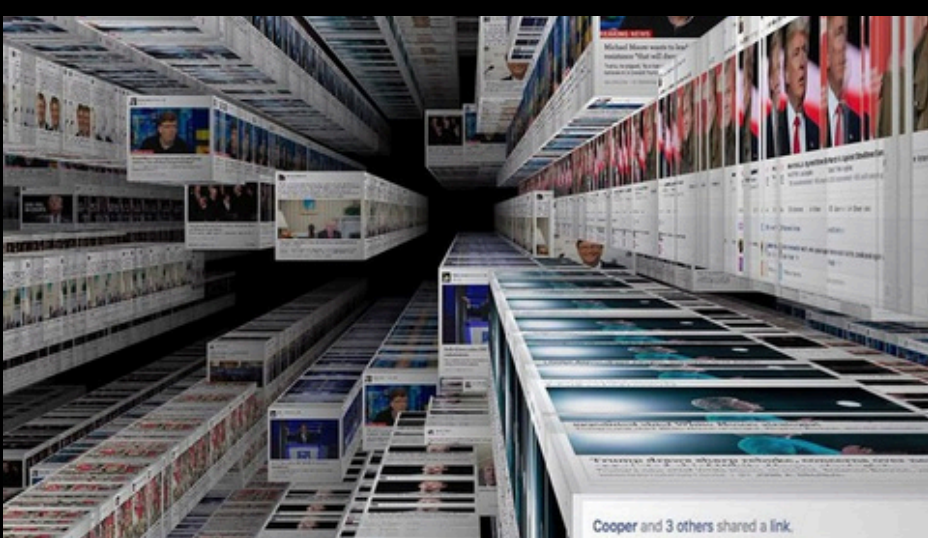
We take Routine of Nepal Banda's headlines at face value; impatient as we are, read news in 'allegedly,' either completely unverified or sifted from citizen journalism, never bothering to confirm them through credible sources or caring enough to revisit. We're just running on assumptions and turning those assumptions into misinformation, because these days, an opinion (any opinion) beats admitting you don't have one yet.



It's a media illiteracy pandemic, yet nobody's checking anybody's temperature.

So, what's the cure, exactly, you ask? Media and Information Literacy, or simply MIL.

If you say it fast enough, it even sounds like a vitamin, and in a way, that's exactly what it is. MIL is the paracetamol equivalent for a digital malaise.





The counter to the banality of the feed or a digital detox concoction, can only be compounded by a media-literate user. It could be a digital somnambulist's guide to breaking free. Well, not from the media itself, but from the autopilot it keeps us on.

It's late now. At exactly 19:10, I got a call from Foodmandu saying my order had arrived. As I'm eating alone in the blue light from Crunchyroll's screen, I wonder since when the practice of eating alone became so uncomfortable to me. *Imagine the misery of being left alone with your own thoughts even while you're eating!* I'm three episodes too deep in to stop now.

But then I had a sort of epiphany. I realised that I was the one who chose this. I read Reddit reviews; I checked MyAnimeList. I put in the work. I searched for it, and I found it. I also had the option of avoiding it completely.

When it was finally time for bed, I reached for my phone the way I always do. It's just gravitational at this point. I replied to all the texts that had piled up in just an hour while I ate. I opened Instagram, and I was back to doomscrolling, inevitable as it has always been. But then I did something completely atypical for me now. I voluntarily stopped the doomscroll; I closed my phone.



Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception, but then I started questioning.

I found myself asking: wait, who made this? Why did it find me tonight of all nights? And what exactly was I about to absorb?

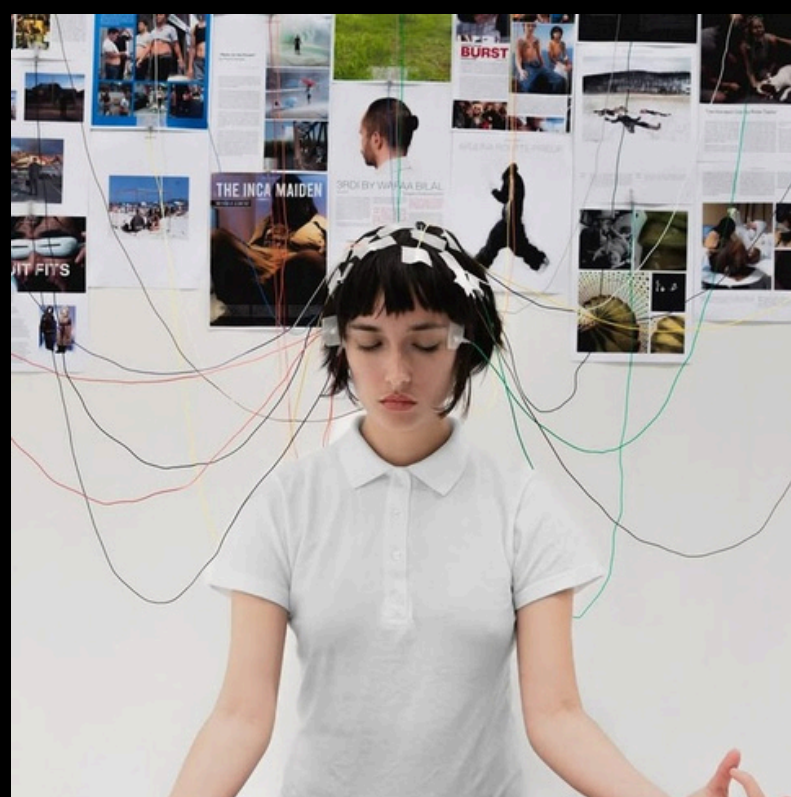
Because MIL is really not about the media at all. Maybe it's just about remembering that I am a person with a point of view. MIL is about the ability to evaluate and analyse the content I come across without letting it pass through me as if I were just a surface to slide on.

While tonight's pause might not have been an elixir for the digital somnambulism, it was a jolt out of a stupor.

It was my personal protest.

And, you know what, in days when life has become so digitised, an active attempt to remain illegible (and critical) is, maybe, for now, the most human thing left for us to do.

Yes, I realise the strings are still there. I just don't feel like dancing on someone else's choreo tonight.



About the author:



Suchita Khadka is a media student, a self-proclaimed connoisseur of all things media. She's the last person who should be giving advice about putting the phone down but she is also, somehow, the first.



# THE CURIOSITY CORNER

**Samjhana  
Rawal  
Sedai**



YouTube  
Radhika Daasi  
Official

**Dr. Bhupesh  
Adhikary**



Journals: Climate Change  
& IPCC Research  
Book: The Sheep Look Up  
— John Brunner

**Hem Raj  
Joshi**



Book: Human  
Resource  
Management (HRM)  
— Asmita/Buddha  
Publications.

**Dr. Uttam  
Sharma**



Podcast: Hidden  
Brain — Shankar  
Vedantam; Planet  
Money — NPR

**Shreesh  
Tripathi**



Book: Indian  
Foreign Policy  
1947-2003 by  
J. N. Dixit.

**Muskan Agrawal**



Book: May Contain Lies:  
How Stories, Statistics and  
Studies Exploit Our Biases  
— and What We Can Do  
About It by Alex Edmans.



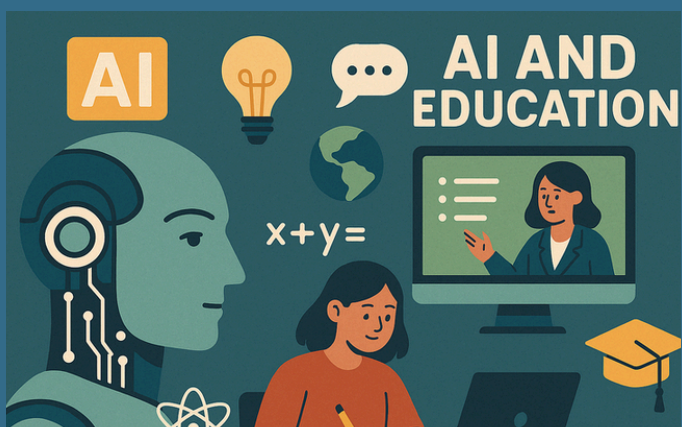
# Prospects of AI in Nepali Education

## THE FUTURE OF NEPAL BEGINS WITH THE EDUCATION OF ITS PEOPLE.

Nepal's current economic framework is spiraling into instability.

The country over-relies on imports, and many young workers migrate every year to find jobs elsewhere (Poudel & Shrestha, 2024). Remittances are not used properly, leading to land monetization and barriers to domestic production. The new administration is aiming to change that.

The Rastriya Swatantra Party of Nepal, led by Prime Minister Balendra (Balen) Shah, aims to reverse Nepal's trajectory via major reforms to its economic structure and government investments. Their ambitious goals for Nepal 2100 must now be put into place, and a crucial step to this is reforming the educational sector.



The Ministry of Education is currently undergoing major shifts under Sasmit Pokharel. The Ministry has separated into two factions: the National Education System and Sports Development. Minister Pokharel aggressively pushes for AI integration and digitalization in schools, putting the faith of Nepal's 2100 goals squarely on its students.

Nepal's hydropower and tourism cannot grow enough on their own to achieve the goals outlined in Vision 2100. Hydropower is a risky means of export, as it is not a scarce resource that can block foreign powers from investing in their own avenues of power generation. Growing tourism is harder to navigate because investments take time and do not guarantee results. What Nepal can provide, however, is a strong framework for a digital powerhouse.

Investing in artificial intelligence is a major quest, but it allows Nepal to join global tech trends. Nepal has the natural resources to sustain the needs of an AI center and is already on the path to building one via its newly passed sovereign wealth fund. To make this work, Nepal needs to educate its population quickly so citizens can not only navigate domestic AI tools but also lead these industries and transform Nepal into an AI-exporting nation.



**"AI SHOULD BE A TOOL FOR LEARNING, NOT A SHORTCUT THAT WEAKENS CREATIVITY, CURIOSITY, AND CRITICAL THINKING."**

During my field visits to Nepali high schools, students' feelings on AI have been mixed, but most agree it will make learning easier and more accessible. Yet, the transition from a consumption to a digitized knowledge economy introduces distinct institutional challenges.

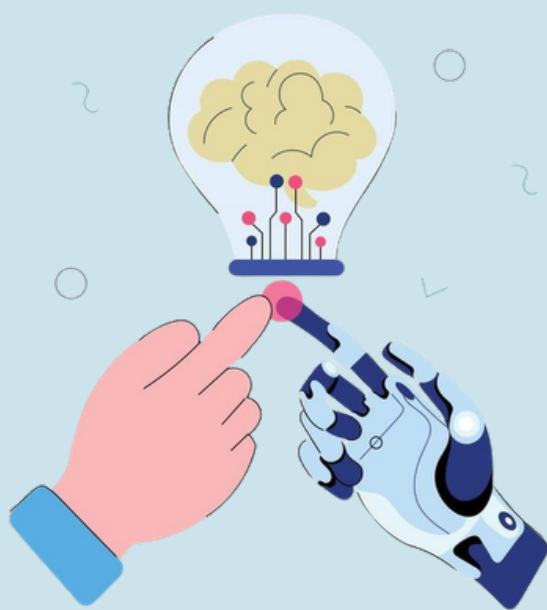
Emerging classroom trends indicate that higher education are hitting bottlenecks caused by unmanaged AI adoption. A recent evaluation given to me from Kathmandu University's examination office highlights: while students demonstrate improved scores on take-home assignments, their performance during independent examinations is actively declining.

According to the university evaluator, the widespread accessibility of generative AI tools has created unhealthy dependencies. Students frequently fail to maintain structured study notes, relying instead on instantaneous online materials. Professors are routinely handed papers using methodologies completely outside the course syllabus, creating a major grading dilemma that is pulling down GPAs (Former Controller of Examinations, Kathmandu University, personal communication, June 2026).



To modernize the Nepali education, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology must shift its approach from passive observations or blanket bans to a strategic engineer of AI use. Global educational data compiled by international research groups suggests that technology should not be introduced uniformly across all age groups (UNESCO 2023). Over-dependence on automation at primary and secondary levels can compromise baseline critical thinking and time management skills. Therefore, education should help restrict AI in early schooling, and save its structured use for higher education where students already have a solid cognitive footing

At the university level, the Ministry must mandate a transition away from traditional rote memorization and into toward project-based learning, dynamic group debates, and real-time oral examinations (Crume & IBM, 2026). Rather than using tech as an automated shortcuts engine, students must be trained in advanced AI literacy, focusing heavily on verification, critical skepticism, and the ethical boundaries of the tool.



Building a digitized service economy requires physical and infrastructural foundations that match these educational ambitions. Nepal must leverage its geographic advantages by investing heavily in hydropower. Reliable, low-cost domestic electricity can power high-performance regional data centers, lower digital transaction costs, and mitigate the severe urban air pollution crises that damage its valuable human capital.

The World Bank notes that advanced technologies like AI and virtual reality classrooms offer an unprecedented opportunity to democratize high-quality tutoring, improve university retention rates, and lower overall educational delivery costs for rural communities (World Bank, 2025). However, if left ungoverned, they risk accelerating urban-rural disparities and saturating the market with degrees stripped of their true academic value. Nepal cannot afford to let technology dilute the critical thinking of its youth. By matching strict evaluation frameworks with aggressive infrastructural investments, the state can transform its service sector from a consumer into a highly competitive engine of artificial intelligence.

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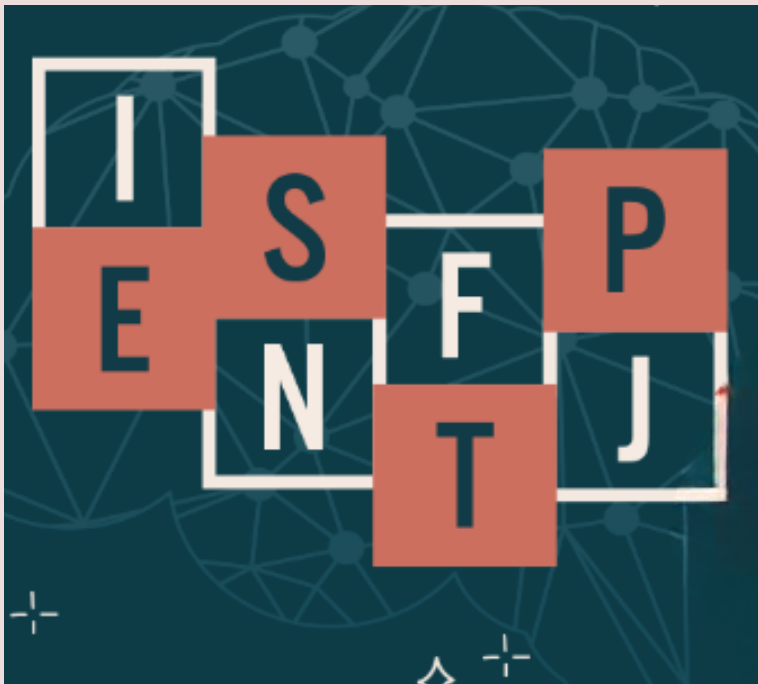
# Beyond Personality:

## MBTI and the Psychology of Becoming Human

## and the Psychology of Becoming Human

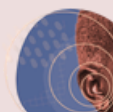


I believe personality is not predetermined but shaped by our experiences, relationships, and environment. The MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) may help us understand how we typically interpret information or make decisions, but it is insufficient to explain why two people with the same personality type may lead very different emotional lives. While one INFJ (Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Judging) may develop into a sympathetic therapist, another may experience persistent anxiety and social disengagement. While one ENTJ (Extraverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Judging) may use visionary leadership to inspire organisations, another may become emotionally distant and domineering.



These differences illustrate that personality is influenced not only by cognitive preferences but also by family upbringing, attachment, education, socioeconomic conditions, cultural values, significant life events, and the ways individuals interpret and respond to those experiences.

Personality therefore, should not be viewed as a fixed identity determined by a four-letter code but as a dynamic and evolving process that changes throughout life through learning, adversity, relationships, and conscious self-reflection. In this sense, the MBTI is best understood as a tool for self-awareness rather than a definitive explanation of human behavior, because who we become is ultimately shaped less by our personality type and more by the choices we make, the environments we inhabit, and the experiences that continually influence our growth.

|                                                                                                    |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br><b>ESTP</b> | <br><b>ESTJ</b> | <br><b>ESFP</b> | <br><b>ESFJ</b> |
| <br><b>ISTP</b> | <br><b>ISTJ</b> | <br><b>ISFP</b> | <br><b>ISFJ</b> |
| <br><b>ENFJ</b>  | <br><b>ENTP</b> | <br><b>ENTJ</b> | <br><b>ENFP</b> |
| <br><b>INTP</b>  | <br><b>INFJ</b> | <br><b>INTJ</b> | <br><b>INFP</b> |

Childhood is one of the most important times in the development of adult mental health, as contemporary developmental psychology repeatedly shows.

The human brain develops at an incredible rate in the early years of life, creating neuronal connections that influence how people view relationships, safety, self-worth, and emotional control.

Children learn more than just language; they also learn whether the world is predictable, whether emotions are acceptable or unacceptable, whether being vulnerable is safe, and whether love is unconditional or needs to be earned.

Even though these early teachings are rarely consciously remembered, they become ingrained in the neurological system and continue to shape adult behaviour decades later.

The idea that psychological trauma always results from tragic occurrences is one of the biggest myths about it. In actuality, trauma is essentially caused by the neurological system's incapacity to process traumatic events.



While severe abuse, violence, and natural disasters undoubtedly qualify as trauma, psychology also acknowledges the profound effects of long-term emotional neglect, inconsistent caregiving, humiliation, harsh criticism, emotional invalidation, or growing up in settings where children felt emotionally unsafe or unseen. Trauma is sometimes defined by what never happened as much as by what did. Some people never felt reassurance when they were afraid, emotional solace when they failed, or complete acceptance when they were vulnerable. Adulthood is subtly shaped by the lack of these experiences in ways that are frequently misinterpreted. These early adaptations often develop into survival tactics that initially shield the infant but later present challenges as adults.

Childhood settings where love seemed to be contingent on success may give rise to perfectionism. When carers are emotionally unavailable, hyper-independence may develop. An early assumption that conflict damages emotional security is typically reflected in excessive people-pleasing. Rejection or criticism on a regular basis might lead to emotional withdrawal. These actions are clever adaptations created by the brain to optimize survival in a certain environment; they are not personality defects.

Unfortunately, long after the initial threat has subsided, the adult nervous system frequently keeps using childhood survival strategies.

Another crucial yet frequently neglected dimension of psychology concerns emotional maturity. Intelligence and emotional maturity are not synonymous.

Highly educated professionals may possess exceptional analytical abilities yet remain emotionally reactive, defensive, or incapable of maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.

Emotional maturity is reflected not in the absence of emotion but in the capacity to experience emotion without becoming dominated by it.

it involves recognizing one's internal states, regulating impulses, tolerating discomfort, accepting responsibility, empathizing with others, and responding thoughtfully rather than reacting automatically.

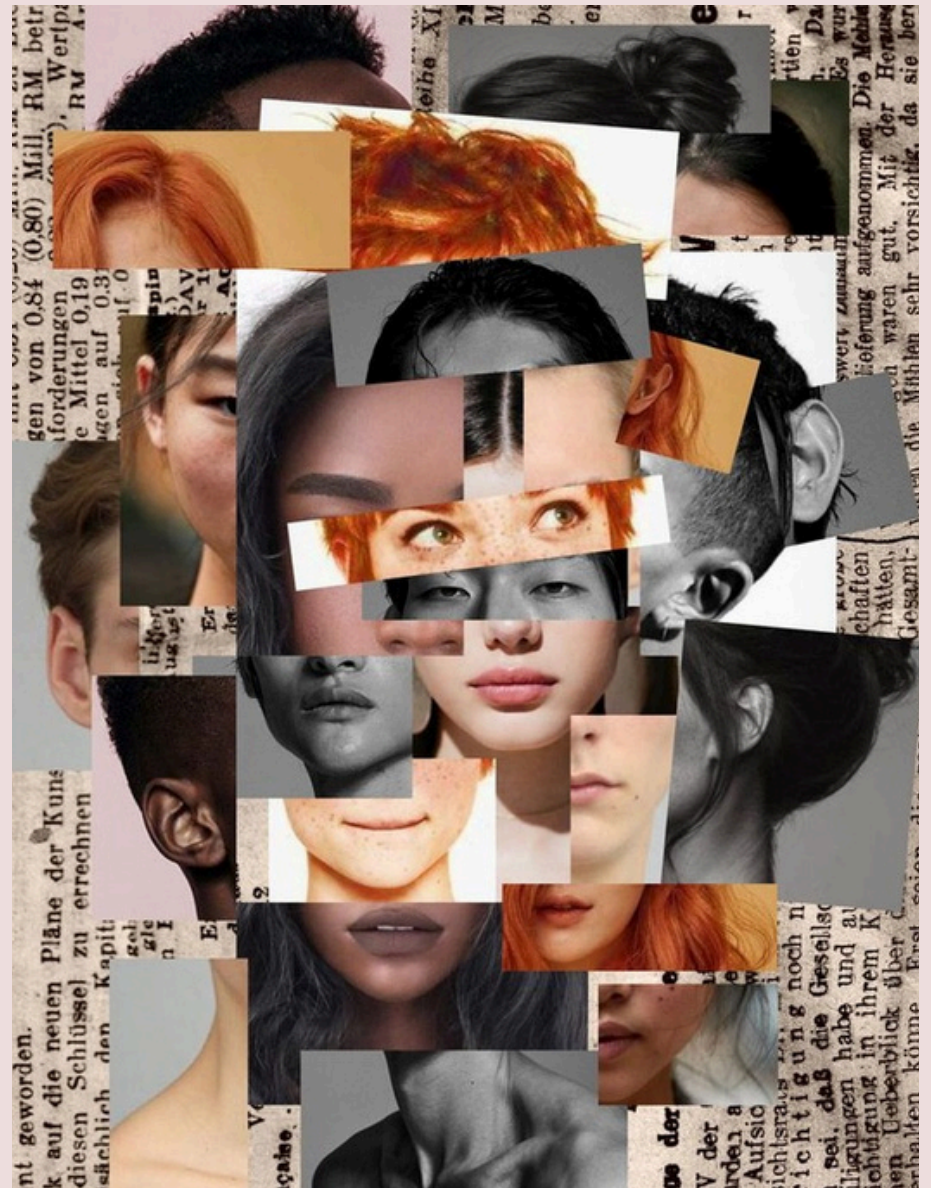
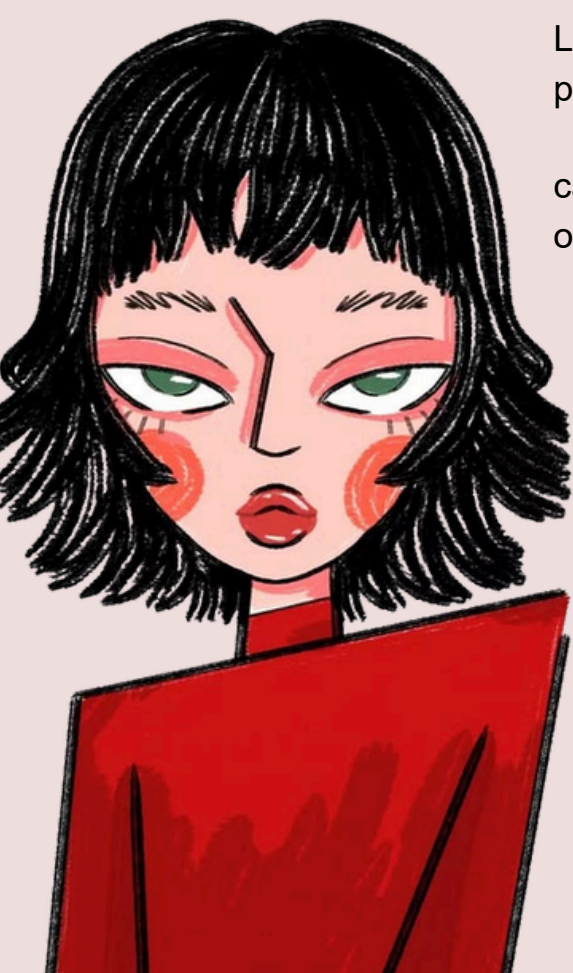
Of course, life would be much easier if achieving inner peace was as simple as turning off unsolicited notifications. In reality, it is rather typical for the mind to not always obey instructions on the first try. Developing awareness necessitates consistent practice rather than band-aid solutions, much like building muscle.

The first step toward healing is having the courage to let go of the suffering we have been carrying for far too long. Forgiveness is the decision to let go of the burden that binds our hearts to the past, not forgetting what happened or justifying the pain we went through. We make room for peace, resiliency, and hope to grow within of us when we let go of grudges, guilt, fear, and regret.

Likewise, personal development is not about changing completely or trying to live up to other people's expectations.

Instead, it is the process of discovering the person we have always been capable of being. It's about learning from our mistakes, embracing our flaws, staying loyal to our principles, and accepting our talents.

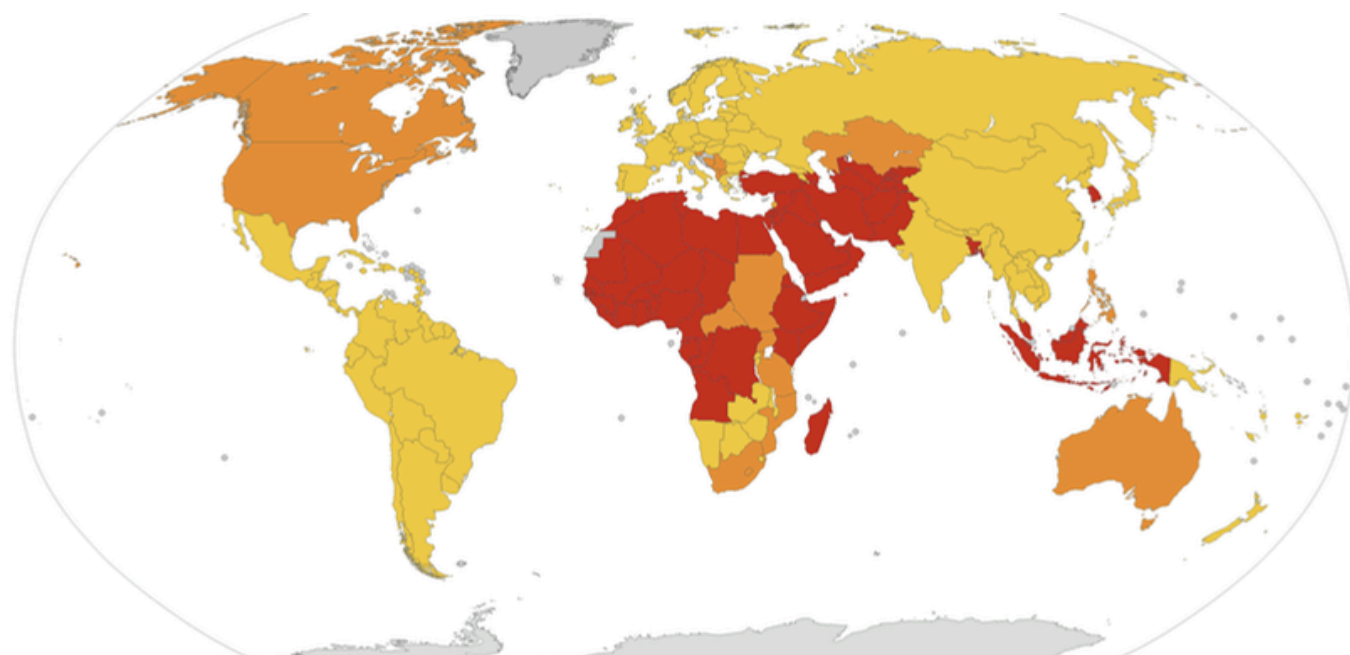
Every obstacle we conquer and every insight we get helps us become truer to who we really are. The most profound psychological question is not, "What personality type am I?" but rather, "What experiences have shaped me, what patterns still influence my life, and who do I choose to become?" The answer is not found in personality tests, but rather in understanding your mind, healing from past experiences, and making deliberate decisions with compassion and self-awareness.



## Dibya Karki



# THE SILENT HORROR OF MALE GENITAL MUTILATION



Map of circumcision prevalence, based on a 2007 WHO report ■ Widespread, near-universal: >80% prevalence ■ Widespread, common: 20-80% prevalence ■ Uncommon: <20% prevalence ■ N/A

Ph9611 - (2007) Male circumcision: global trends and determinants of prevalence, safety, and acceptability, World Health Organization, p. 8 ISBN:

To begin my case, I will outline what circumcision is and how it does harm to children both when performed correctly or incorrectly. Circumcision is, for those unaware, the removal of the foreskin around the head of the male genital. This act is done without the consent of the child and is an irreversible process.

The removal of the skin is often argued by some as entirely harmless to the child, but this is false. Some new emerging data seems to suggest that circumcision can cause trauma in some infants.

The removal of this skin also takes away many specialized nerve endings and exposes several glands which can have risks. This removal can cause nerve damage and leads to a dulling of senses in the male genital. Furthermore, the loss of these nerves can sometimes lead to issues with procreation in adulthood.

All these problems can occur when circumcision is performed correctly. However, there are even more dangers when surgery is performed incorrectly. In more than 12% of cases extra skin is removed leading to bleeding and damage further down of the penis.

Even when the correct amount of skin is removed roughly 1 in every 200 boys will still have bleeding which can be dangerous and cause further problems. Just under 0.5% of all circumcisions will have some form of complication or adverse event, these events can be minor or major sometimes leading to death.

**IN FACT, IN THE US ALONE THERE ARE MORE THAN 100 DEATHS EACH YEAR DUE TO THIS NEEDLESS PROCEDURE.**

## GENDER, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ETHICS

**Female** genital mutilation (FGM) is widely acknowledged as an abhorrent crime. A horrifying illegal act of barbarism that violates a woman's autonomy, consent, and rights.

A crime that permanently damages her body, scarring her against her consent. Such an act has been formally declared by several international acts and laws as a violation of human rights. A joint UNICEF and UNFPA paper said that FGM violates the right to life, the right of physical and mental integrity, the right to health, the right not to be subjected to torture, and the rights of children.

However, such legal action and acknowledgement of female genital mutilation have not been extended to male genital mutilation. In fact, male genital mutilation (MGM) is legal and prevalent in many nations.

MGM is seen even as socially acceptable in the US, Australia, the middle east and most of Africa. Of course, most people don't call it genital mutilation but rather circumcision. This article will discuss how widespread circumcision is; the harm done by both correctly and incorrectly performed circumcisions; and argues for a conception of circumcision that views it similarly to FGM.

My argument that male circumcision is a violation of rights and should be considered MGM is deeply important as roughly half of all men in the US are circumcised each year, and roughly 38% of the world's male population is circumcised. If circumcision really is comparable to FGM morally and legally, as I argue, then it is one of the widest spread and pervasive crimes ever perpetrated against children.



## THE SILENT HORROR OF MALE GENITAL MUTILATION

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Circumcision is not only harmful to children and thus immoral but also violates human rights and laws in many of the same ways as FGM. FGM is illegal as it violates the rights of children and their consent. Circumcision does the same; it is performed without the consent of the children and often without a full risk explanation to their parents. Furthermore, it is an irreversible process that can have long-term consequences which children do not agree to.

Some may argue that, unlike FGM, circumcision has medical use and is in fact sanitary. However, this is false; circumcision has little medical benefit and, as mentioned above, can in fact cause harm.

There is some evidence that circumcision may have had some small positive effects during the Bronze Age before indoor plumbing, but with our modern technology, it is a useless practice that does nothing but harm the child. Just like FGM, circumcision can be a form of torture, leading to trauma violating UN human rights laws.

Female genital mutilation and circumcision share the same core features. Both acts are performed without the child's consent, both processes are irreversible, both do harm to the child, and both acts have no medical need and are done with little to no benefit for the child. As both acts violate the same core moral and legal views, it is high time we treat them the same.

Circumcision has been ignored and justified by religions and social norms; however, there is no justification for violating rights and morals in such an obvious way. If circumcision is equivalent to FGM, as I have argued, it is high time the international community takes action to ban this abhorrent act of needless harm.

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# LAUGHING THROUGH THE HEADLINES”

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a meme probably saves a thousand awkward editorials.

Open any newspaper, scroll through social media, or watch the evening news, and you will eventually stumble upon a cartoon with an oversized politician, a sarcastic meme about inflation, or a sketch that somehow explains a complicated issue better than a two-page report. It is almost as if the media has discovered that sometimes people are more willing to laugh before they are willing to listen.



Political cartoons have been around for generations, poking fun at people in power with exaggerated noses, impossible hairstyles, and expressions that somehow capture an entire scandal. Memes are simply their younger, faster cousin. Instead of waiting for tomorrow's paper, they appear within minutes of an event, spreading across phones before the news anchor has even finished speaking.

There is a reason these little jokes travel so far. Our brains naturally pay attention to things that surprise us, make us smile, or spark curiosity. Humor lowers our guard, making serious topics feel less intimidating and easier to remember. A clever cartoon or meme can package a complicated issue into a single image that sticks in the mind long after headlines are forgotten.

Of course, this superpower comes with responsibility. A funny image can simplify an issue, but it can also oversimplify it. A joke can start a conversation, but it can just as easily spread misunderstanding if it ignores the facts.



Perhaps that is why cartoons and memes remain one of the media's favorite tools. They entertain, they provoke, and occasionally they make us laugh at problems that would otherwise make us sigh. Whether we admit it or not, sometimes the quickest route to understanding begins with a joke.



MUSKAN AGRAWAL



.....*In Their Own Words*

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DHARMENDRA P.<br>LEKHAK | <p><b>If you could describe your IIDS experience in one word, what would it be and why?</b></p> <p>Resilient. My experience at IIDS has shown me how important it is to continue producing meaningful research even when resources are limited. At times, research activities can slow down because of funding constraints, but this also teaches us to be more focused, practical, and committed. For me, IIDS represents a space where research ideas continue to move forward despite challenges.</p>                                                                                                                                |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| NINA APPICELLO          | <p><b>What advice would you give to future interns?</b></p> <p>Say yes to everything</p> <p><b>What has been the most surprising thing you learned here?</b></p> <p>People’s willingness to help</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | AAKRITI KAFLE | <p><b>What skills do you think every young researcher should develop?</b></p> <p>Data analysis, data storytelling and Critical Thinking</p> <p><b>What is one task, or moment you are proud of?</b></p> <p>Serving as the emcee at the NDC 3.0 dissemination event.</p> |
| JIBAN BABU<br>SEDAI     | <p><b>What is one thing you enjoy most about working with the IIDS team?</b></p> <p>I enjoy the team’s energy and the shared motivation to complete work quickly and efficiently.</p> <p><b>What has been your most memorable moment at IIDS?</b></p> <p>Pokhara retreat.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| DHARMENDRA P.<br>LEKHAK | <p><b>What is one thing people may not know about your work?</b></p> <p>One aspect of research that often goes unnoticed is the extensive planning required before data collection begins. A significant part of my work involves designing research methodologies, developing study protocols, and preparing detailed implementation plans. This includes formulating research questions, selecting appropriate methodological approaches, designing data collection tools, determining sampling strategies, and developing the overall study framework to ensure the research produces robust, reliable, and actionable findings.</p> |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



# THE ECONOMICS OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP

Every four years, the FIFA World Cup unites billions of people around a single passion: football. It is the most watched sporting event in the world, with the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar reaching approximately five billion viewers across television, streaming platforms, and digital media. The final between Argentina and France alone attracted an estimated 1.42 billion viewers, making it one of the most watched broadcasts in history. While the tournament is celebrated for its unforgettable moments on the pitch, it is equally significant off the field. Hosting the FIFA World Cup is one of the largest economic undertakings a nation can make, influencing employment, tourism, infrastructure, investment, and overall economic activity.



Preparing to host the World Cup requires years of planning and billions of dollars in investment. Governments build or renovate stadiums, expand airports, modernize transport systems, improve telecommunications, and increase hotel capacity. These projects generate employment in construction, engineering, hospitality, transportation, retail, and tourism while also stimulating demand across several sectors of the economy. Although economists continue to debate whether these benefits last in the long run, there is little doubt that the preparation period creates substantial economic activity.

The 2002 FIFA World Cup, jointly hosted by Japan and South Korea, marked the first World Cup held in Asia and the first to be hosted by two nations. The tournament generated an estimated US\$53.2 billion in gross economic output and approximately US\$27.7 billion in value added to the two economies. It also supported around 570,700 jobs through investments in transport infrastructure, stadium construction, tourism, and related industries. While both countries experienced improvements in infrastructure and international visibility, subsequent research found that much of the economic benefit was concentrated during the preparation and tournament periods rather than producing sustained long-term GDP growth.

When Germany hosted the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the country already possessed advanced infrastructure, allowing investments to focus primarily on modernization rather than large-scale construction. The tournament attracted more than two million international visitors, increasing consumer spending and boosting sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and retail. Temporary employment increased during the event, particularly in service industries. However, several economic studies concluded that despite these short-term gains, the tournament had little measurable long-term impact on GDP growth or unemployment, suggesting that much of the additional spending represented a shift in economic activity rather than entirely new growth.



The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa represented a historic milestone as the first World Cup hosted on the African continent. South Africa invested heavily in airports, highways, public transportation systems, and stadiums, creating an estimated 130,000 to 160,000 temporary jobs during the preparation period. The tournament contributed approximately US\$509 million to South Africa's GDP and attracted over 300,000 international visitors, generating significant revenue for hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. Nevertheless, maintaining several newly constructed stadiums proved financially challenging after the tournament, and many economists concluded that the long-term economic gains were more modest than originally anticipated.

Brazil hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup with the expectation that the tournament would strengthen economic growth while showcasing the country's rapid development. Government estimates suggested that the World Cup generated approximately US\$13–14 billion in GDP and supported around one million direct and indirect jobs, particularly in construction, tourism, and hospitality. Millions of visitors traveled to Brazil during the tournament, increasing spending across local economies. However, the country was simultaneously experiencing slowing economic growth and political instability, meaning that many of the anticipated long-term economic benefits were overshadowed by broader macroeconomic challenges.



The 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia involved substantial investments in transportation, airports, hotels, and sporting infrastructure across several host cities. According to official estimates, the tournament contributed approximately US\$14 billion to Russia's GDP, equivalent to roughly 1 percent of the country's annual economic output, while supporting around 220,000 jobs during the preparation and hosting phases. The improved transport systems and urban infrastructure continue to benefit many host cities, although researchers remain divided over whether these investments generated lasting economic growth beyond the event itself.

No World Cup has required greater financial investment than Qatar 2022. With expenditures estimated at more than US\$200 billion, Qatar transformed its infrastructure through the construction of new stadiums, an extensive metro network, highways, hotels, and even entirely new urban developments. These projects generated employment opportunities across construction, engineering, logistics, and hospitality over more than a decade. In the short term, the tournament contributed an estimated 0.7 to 1.0 percent of Qatar's GDP, while also supporting the country's broader Qatar National Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify the economy beyond oil and gas through tourism, services, and international investment. The long-term economic legacy of these investments, however, is still being evaluated by researchers.

The spotlight now turns to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. As the first World Cup to feature 48 teams, it is expected to become the largest tournament in FIFA history. Since much of the necessary infrastructure already exists across the three host nations, investments are expected to focus on stadium upgrades, transport improvements, and event operations rather than entirely new construction. According to FIFA-supported economic impact assessments, the tournament is projected to contribute approximately US\$40.9 billion to global GDP while supporting nearly 824,000 full-time equivalent jobs worldwide, including approximately 185,000 jobs in the United States alone. These figures highlight the enormous economic scale of the tournament even before a single match has been played.

Despite these impressive statistics, economists remain cautious when evaluating the true economic impact of hosting the FIFA World Cup. Research consistently shows that while the tournament generates employment, attracts tourism, and stimulates infrastructure investment during the preparation and event periods, many of these benefits are temporary. Long-term economic success depends on how effectively host countries continue to utilize their infrastructure, attract future investment, and convert global attention into sustained economic development. The FIFA World Cup is therefore far more than a month-long football tournament. It is a global economic phenomenon that shapes cities, creates employment, attracts investment, and transforms national infrastructure. While every edition leaves behind memorable sporting moments, its lasting legacy is ultimately determined not by the goals scored on the field, but by whether the billions invested create enduring opportunities for future generations.



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About the authors: Arnav Pokharel started watching football during the 2010 World Cup. He fell in love with the sport because of Steven Gerrard, and he claims to know everything about the sport. Shashwat Pokharel doesn't claim to be a football expert, but he's always curious about the stories behind the game. This article is the result of a shared curiosity about how the FIFA World Cup shapes economies around the world.

Arnav Pokharel and  
Shashwat Pokharel



# THE STRUGGLE FOR KASHMIR

## AN UNRESOLVABLE CONFLICT



On April 22, 2025, rebel gunmen attacked a resort in the Indian-controlled Kashmir region. The gunmen killed 26 people and injured 17 more, primarily killing Indian Hindu men. Indian officials have blamed Pakistan for the attacks despite there being currently no evidence of Pakistan's involvement; instead, the Resistance Front (TRF), a rebel terrorist group, has claimed responsibility for the attack. In response to this attack, India has launched airstrikes into Pakistan, hitting nine targets and killing 31 people and injuring many more in Operation Sindoor. India has also threatened to cut off fresh water to Pakistan by reneging on the Indus Water Treaty that has stood for 65 years.

Pakistan, in response to Indian attacks, has launched its own bombardment killing a dozen more people. The two countries stood at the brink of war; however, this is far from the first time they have done so.



The incident in 2025 was just one in a long string of violent attacks between the two nations, which continue to threaten war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. Since this event in April last year, there have been hundreds more, less publicized attacks and ceasefire violations.

Every year since 2018, there are between 2,000 and 5,000 violent attacks between India and Pakistan forces in the Kashmir region. The tension in the Kashmir region goes back to the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. The Kashmir territory did not at first join either nation; in October 1947, after mounting attacks from several Muslim rebel groups in the territory, the Hindu leader of Kashmir agreed to temporarily join India.

India used this as justification to claim the whole territory as under its control. Pakistan also claimed control of the territory. These competing claims of control led to the First Indo-Pakistani War, which ended in 1949 when the U.N. negotiated a ceasefire.

This tenuous situation became more volatile when China also claimed a section of Kashmir in 1962 and entered the competition for the region. Tensions continued between the nations until another war broke out in 1965. This concluded, yet again, by a U.N. brokered peace treaty.



However, just a few years later, more violence broke out over the Kashmir region in 1971, eventually ending with both nations signing the Simla Agreement.

This deal established the "Line of Control" dividing Kashmir into sections governed by India and Pakistan respectively, but both nations still claim ownership of most of the territory of Kashmir.

Violence continued to escalate in the Kashmir region with Pakistani-backed militants and Islamist terror groups fighting and launching terror attacks from 1989 onward. Between 1989 and 2008, there were over 47,000 deaths associated with separatist violence.

These terror groups continue to operate in the region to this day, carrying out attacks against primarily Hindu and Indian targets.



In 2019, a suicide truck bombing killed 40 Indian soldiers, sparking new violence and protests in Kashmir. The Indian government cracked down on Kashmir in response to this attack ; it cut off

The Indian government cracked down on Kashmir in response to this attack; it cut off communications and instituted a harsh curfew. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially annexed the region during these crackdowns, removing its special autonomous status, leading to widespread resentment from Kashmiri people and more protests.

In this climate of violence and protest, TRF formed and began attacking Indian targets. The Kashmir region continues to be one of the most highly militarized locations on earth, and it is still highly disputed between India, Pakistan, and China. With attacks continuing to the present-day, fears of another Indo-Pakistan war are growing. The current attacks are dangerously similar to those that started wars between these powers in the past. International fears of war are not overblown but rather a reasonable expectation based on previous violence between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. Previous conflicts have been settled with international actions by the U.N. and other international interventions.



However, with the declining power of the U.N. in the wake of the Trump presidency, such peace measures may no longer be viable. India-Pakistan violence is a difficult problem to tackle, but without an international response, the dangers of full-scale war become more likely.

The international community has in the past responded quickly with statements and calls for peace from the United States, China, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, and the U.N. With external help, peace talks continue to move forward, but the cause of this conflict remains. As long as both Pakistan and India claim ownership over the Kashmir region, violence will likely continue. Any solution to this conflict will need to permanently resolve the Kashmir territory dispute.

Long-term peace in the region may seem nearly impossible, but with U.N. support, an independent nation of Kashmir may be a possible long-term solution. The independence movement in Kashmir is the prevailing desire of most Kashmiri people, both in the Pakistani and Indian-controlled regions. Both India and Pakistan have long ignored or actively fought against this desire for independence, at times entirely removing this third option from the negotiating table. However, considering the recent attacks and rising tensions, this could be the time for the Kashmiri people to push for independence. With the current situation and international eyes on the region, this hitherto unthinkable third option now has suddenly become a viable solution to a decades-old conflict.

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About the author: Erik Fagerstrom is currently working as a summer intern at IIDS. In this role he is researching equal rights for the Nepali diaspora and supporting broader IIDS projects. He is a rising senior at Haverford College pursuing a double major in Political Science and Sociology. His primary interests lie in security studies with a focus on violent nonstate actors such as terrorist groups and causes of interstate warfare.





# EATERIES AROUND IIDS



Ask anyone at IIDS where to eat, and you will get an opinion within seconds. There is always something happening around food here. Bishnu dai will make sure you get something delicious for lunch, while Samjhana didi's especially good chicken gravy appears on the menu every other day something many of us quietly look forward to. And on special occasions, lunch at IIDS becomes special in its own right.

But sometimes, you want to step out. Maybe you feel like going somewhere after lunch, or need a place to unwind after office hours with colleagues. Between back-to-back meetings, field visits, and the odd deadline scramble, the streets around the office have quietly become a food map of their own: a rotation of go-to spots for a quick coffee, a working lunch, or a proper sit-down meal with colleagues. Some are old reliables; a few are newer discoveries that made their way onto the list through word of mouth and, in at least one case, a viral video.

## FOR GROUPS & HEARTY MEALS

**Pali by The Bakery Cafe:** Non-veg nachos, twice-cooked pork, and hot pot; ideal for team meetings, partner meetings, or a group lunch. The space is relaxed enough for a working discussion but still feels like an occasion, which makes it a natural pick for meetings with partners or visiting colleagues.

**Navaraj Sekuwa Corner:** Pork sekuwa with puffed rice, radish achar, and tomato achar; a quick, casual, no-fuss lunch option. The menu does not try to do too much, which is part of

the appeal everything is grilled with attention rather than spread thin across dozens of options. It is quick and reasonably priced, easy to grab on a short break between tasks.

**Sherpa Thakali:** Mustang aloo and chicken timmur; the place to go for a proper, hearty traditional meal. The setting leans traditional, which makes it a comfortable choice for a relaxed lunch rather than a working meeting. Portions are generous, so it is worth going with a bit of an appetite.

**Sita Khaja Ghar:** Buff chowmein and chicken chowmein; reliable, filling, and perfect for a quick everyday lunch. The food is not fancy, but it is exactly what you want on a day when there is not much time to spare. Prices are modest, which makes it an easy everyday choice rather than something reserved for special occasions.

**MV Burger House:** Chicken popcorn and burgers; a good option when you want

something Western and casual. Portions are generous enough that you likely will not need to order a side to feel full. A solid option to keep in rotation when the usual lunch spots start to feel repetitive.

**Tid Bits:** Combo deals with crunchy fried chicken, wings, and peri-peri fries; best for sharing with a group. Tid Bits is best approached with a group, since the combo deals are clearly built for sharing. The standout combo pairs crunchy fried chicken with wings and peri-peri fries, giving the table a good spread without needing to order separately.

**KOKO:** Kimchi fried rice; a spicy and flavourful change of pace from the usual lunch options. KOKO is worth a visit when you want something with more spice and character than the usual lunch options nearby.





CAFÉS & COFFEE BREAKS

**Khyaspaal Koffee:** Peach iced tea; an affordable, refreshing stop for a quick break between meetings. Prices are affordable, making it an easy habit to fall into rather than an occasional treat. The space is compact, so it suits a quick visit rather than a long sit-down. A reliable choice when you just need ten minutes away from your desk.



**Himalayan Java Express:** Coffee and brownie with vanilla ice cream; a comfortable spot for longer meetings or a mid-afternoon pick-me-up. The seating is comfortable enough to sit through a longer discussion without feeling rushed, which makes it well suited to meetings with guests. Service is generally quick, so it works whether you are stopping briefly or settling in for a longer conversation. Worth considering when you need a professional but relaxed setting outside the office.

**Marico Bakery:** Cakes and sandwiches; a dependable option for a quick snack, light lunch, or takeaway. Marico Bakery is a good option when you want something quick without sacrificing quality. The cakes are a reliable treat, and the sandwiches make for a satisfying, no-fuss lunch. It suits a working lunch eaten at your desk, since orders are easy to pick up and go.

QUICK BITES & STREET FOOD

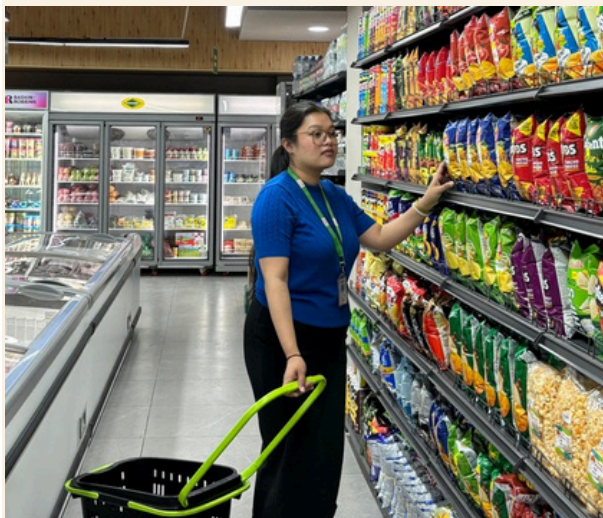
**TikTok Pani Puri House:** Pani puri; a quick, casual snack stop when you want something light and different. The pani puri is fresh, well spiced, and consistently good, exactly what you would want from a spot built around a single dish. It is best treated as a snack stop rather than a full meal, so pair it with something else if you are properly hungry.

**Pokhara Pizza:** Pizza and cheese balls; a budget-friendly option with generous portions, especially for groups. Pokhara Pizza is a budget-friendly option that still manages generous portions. The pizza is a reliable order, and the cheese balls make a good addition if you are ordering a few people. It is well suited to feeding a group without stretching the budget too far.

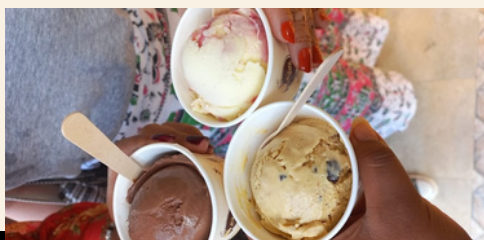
**Momoland:** Signature momo; a viral spot worth trying at least once, especially when introducing new colleagues or visitors to the area. Momoland is the spot that went viral on social media, and it is worth trying at least once to see what the attention was about. The signature momo is the clear draw, and it is easy to see why it caught on given the flavour and presentation. It tends to get busy, particularly around peak lunch hours, so it is worth planning around that if you are short on time.



SOMETHING DIFFERENT



**Horizon Mart:** Horizon Mart is primarily a grocery stop, but it is worth mentioning its ice cream selection alone. The variety on offer is easily the best nearby, useful for picking up a treat on the way back to the office. Better suited to a quick errand than a sit-down visit, given its function as a shop rather than a café. Worth keeping in mind whenever you need something beyond food, too.



**About the authors:** Shriju Thapa and Ashila Gurung share a curiosity about food and the stories behind what we eat. While both are passionate about exploring different flavours, dishes, and dining experiences, this article is driven by their shared interest in the way food brings people together and shapes the experiences of a place.



# CLOSING THE FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING GAP: INSIDE IIDS'S FLAP INITIATIVE



## FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING ACCELERATION PROGRAM (FLAP)

Across Nepal, thousands of students studying in public schools are falling into an inevitable “poverty trap”. Students move from primary to secondary level without a firm grip on basic literacy and numeracy : a gap that compounds year after year and quietly shapes long-term academic outcomes. The Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) is piloting a targeted response: the Foundational Learning Acceleration Program (FLAP).

FLAP is built on a simple premise:

foundational gaps in Math and English need to be caught and closed early, with both consistent human support and adaptive, personalized content targeting the students in grade 4 and 5. The intervention is most effective in grade 4 and 5 because it is the nearest low-cost window to intervene and a natural checkpoint before secondary-level material. This is also a period where confidence and motivation are still recoverable; students who repeatedly fail at basic tasks in these grades often start disengaging from school altogether. The FLAP program combines two complementary pillars.

The first is human-led remediation — diagnostic baseline assessments identify each student's specific gaps, followed by daily one-to-two-hour targeted sessions led by tutors in a computer lab setting, with continuous AI-driven assessment tracking progress along the way. The second pillar is a personalized digital learning platform, where generative AI curates and adapts content from established resources, including Nepal government's Curriculum Development Center, Khan Academy, Zearn, Sikai Chautari, Prodigy games and OLE Nepal — into individualized learning paths for each student, supported by smart assessments, AI-generated feedback and hints, and progress tracking.



The program is currently being piloted in two schools viz. Saraswati Niketan Secondary School located at Teku and Tilingataar Secondary School located at Tokha, where the intervention targets academically low-performing Grade 4 and 5 students, who are selected after an initial baseline assessment. The digital learning platform is already live at [www.iidslabs.org](http://www.iidslabs.org), giving the team a functional base to iterate on as the pilot progresses.

What distinguishes FLAP from a standard remediation program is its attempt to pair the accountability and relationship-building of in-person tutoring with the scalability of AI-personalized content — treating the two not as alternatives, but as reinforcing halves of the same intervention. For a resource-constrained education system, that combination matters: it aims to deliver individualized instruction at a cost and scale that pure human tutoring alone cannot sustain.

As the pilot moves from preparation into full implementation this year, its outcomes will offer an early signal of whether this hybrid model can be a viable, replicable approach to closing foundational learning gaps in similar school settings.

The program is led by Dr. Uttam Sharma, who serves as project supervisor, with Rukesh Paudel and Suchita Khadka facilitating implementation on the ground. Samyem Tuladhar has contributed as a volunteer developer, building the digital learning platform that underpins the program's personalized-content pillar.

**Initiative Launched on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2026**

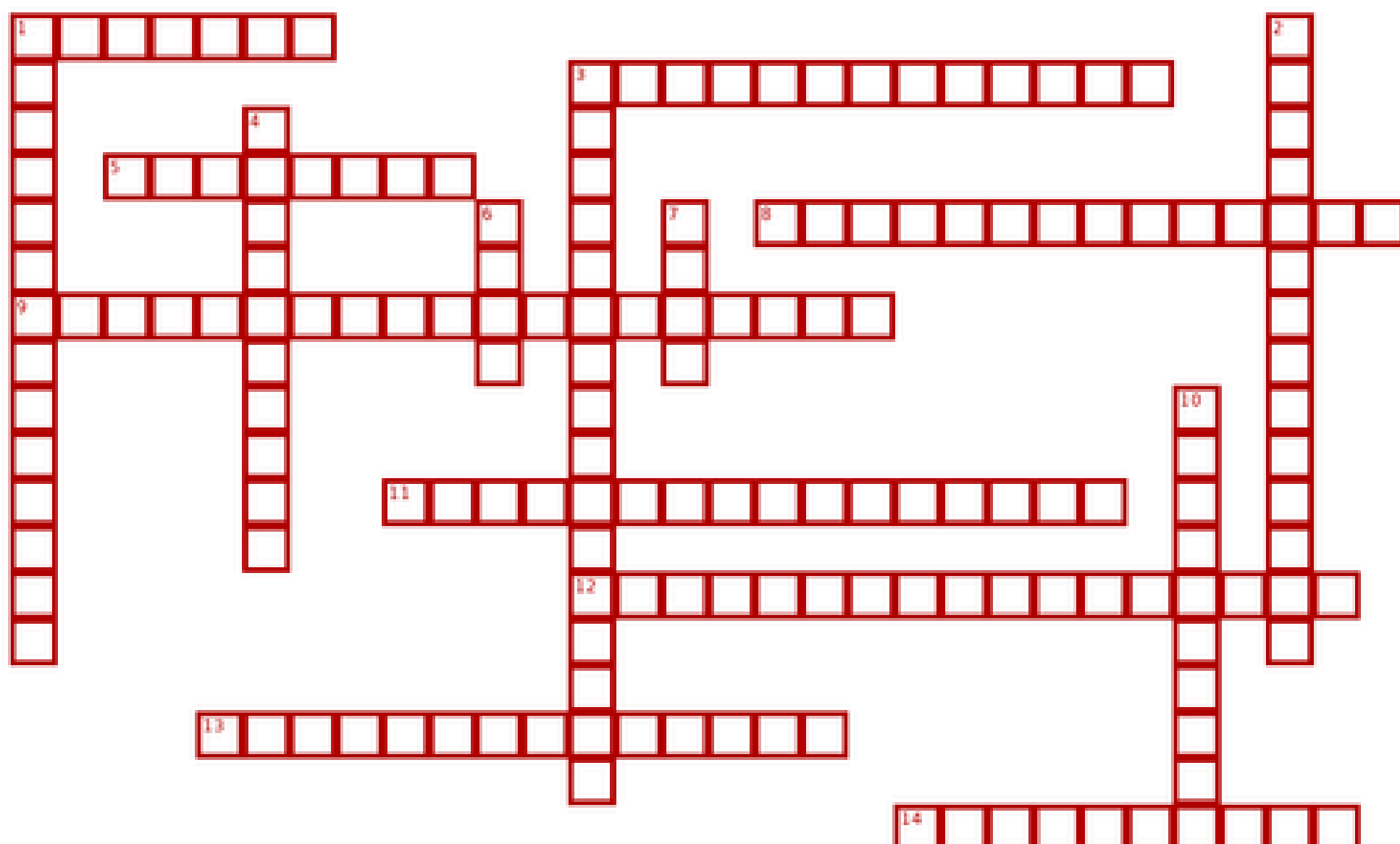
Rukesh Paudel





# IIDS- THE THINK TANK BRAIN TEASER

Complete the crossword using the clues below.  
All answers relate to IIDS.

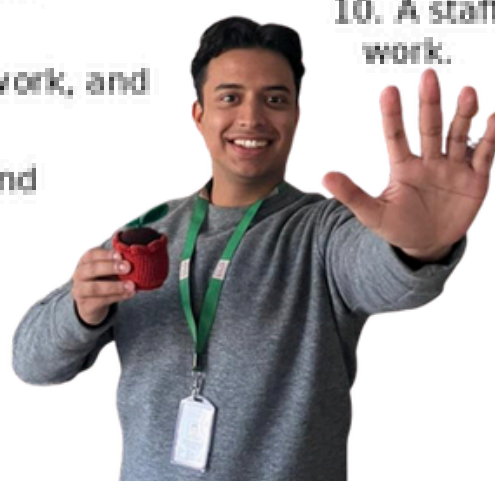


## ACROSS

1. A climate goal where emissions are balanced through reductions and removals.
3. Seasonal policy warriors powered by curiosity, Google Docs, and deadlines.
5. A system connecting agriculture, markets, nutrition, and policy.
8. Economic activity powered by technology, platforms, and online services.
9. A roadmap that turns national challenges into policy direction.
11. An economy driven by research, ideas, skills, and innovation.
12. Using international relations to advance trade, investment, and growth.
13. The movement of young people for study, work, and opportunity.
14. Migrant income that supports households and strengthens the economy.

## DOWN

1. Nepalis abroad connected to Nepal through skills, capital, and networks.
2. Rules and strategies that shape growth, jobs, trade, and markets.
3. Deep institutional change aimed at long-term improvement.
4. A long-term national imagination for Nepal's future.
6. Raw information transformed into evidence through analysis.
7. A Nepali word for knowledge and an initiative linked to learning.
10. A staff name associated with survey and statistical work.







- Dracula – Tame Impala & Jennie



- Love Is Embarrassing – Olivia Rodrigo



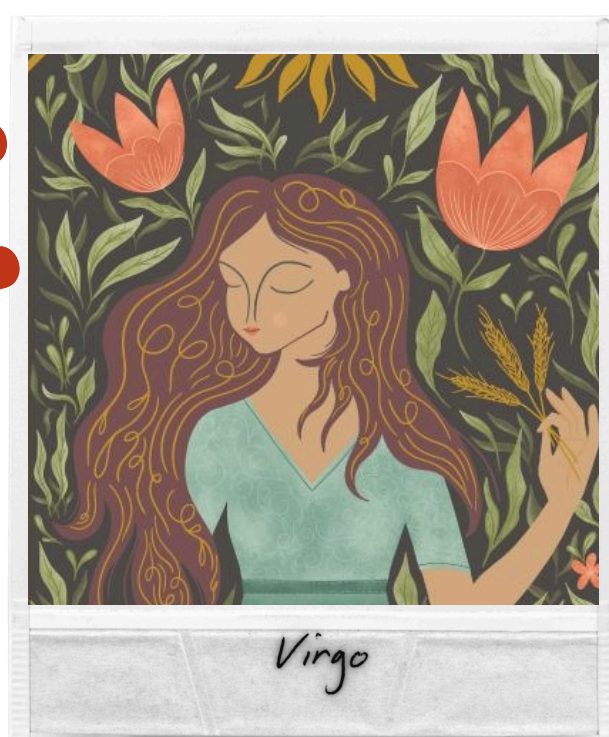
- The Pot – Tool



- Turn the Page – Metallica
- Cruel Summer – Bananarama

# ZODIAC PLAYLIST

We asked our office what they've been listening to and matched it to their sign.



- Circles – Mac Miller



- Jackpot – Cheema Y & Gur Sidhu
- Jeevan Hamro Sanglo Pani Ho – Binod Gurung



- Lag Ja Gale – Lata Mangeshkar
- Aakha Bhitra – Dawa Gyalmo
- God's Plan – Drake



- Jurukka Karnali – Astha Raut & Smarika Phuyal
- Maya Ko Dori Le – Deepak Bajracharya



# Meet the Team

A collaborative effort by the IIDS team.

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